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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXV, Issue No. 140

www.saipantribune.com | THURSDAY JULY 16, 2015 | www.facebook.com/saipantribune | 75¢

DUE TO COMMUNICATIONS OUTAGE

Torres declares state of emergency

By JOEL PINAROC
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REPORTER

Acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres declared a state of significant emergency yesterday on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota as the massive communications breakdown continues to affect the CNMI.

Torres

Torres said the declaration was made after his meeting yesterday with IT&E representatives led by James Oehlerking, the chief executive officer of PTI, which is the mother company of the service provider.

After hearing the updates, Torres signed yesterday afternoon Executive Order 2015-09, which will be in effect in the Commonwealth for 30 days.

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JOEL PINAROC

James Oehlerking, CEO of PTI, mother company of IT&E, right, and Janice Tenorio face lawmakers Wednesday afternoon to give updates on Internet services in the CNMI.

IT&E begins dive to undersea cable

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

» Divers spot no damage yesterday

As of 4:35pm yesterday, IT&E-hired divers had gone down as far as 135 feet and followed 300 feet of the damaged undersea fiber optic cable between Saipan and Tinian that has caused communications difficulties on island. The divers have discovered no physical damage yet, IT&E said.

The divers took two dives yesterday starting from the Coral Ocean Point Resort. The second was their last dive.

Divers rested 45 minutes between each dive.

The IT&E sales and marketing office were updated through email at 4:35pm.

See IT&E on Page 4

Surviving without Internet

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
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REPORTER

The world stopped for most people in the CNMI when Internet and phone lines went down all at the same time a week ago yesterday. Waking up with the sudden disconnection to the rest of the globe just caught them off guard.

Businesses and work aside, being cut off and having no access to Internet and cyberspace and social media were not a totally bad thing.

For one, a lot of families and friends flocked to various beaches during the last weekend.

"I live near San Antonio beach so I walk there every afternoon. When I went there that Sunday afternoon,

See SURVIVING on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

LIBERATION BIG RAFFLE

Liberation 2015 beauties assist many people who were buying tickets for the festivities' raffle drawing. This year's grand prize is $10,000 and the baby grand prize is $5,000. The carnival grounds re-opened on Tuesday after two typhoons resulted to the grounds' closure for two weeks. The Liberation Day parade, which was postponed twice because of the bad weather, will finally push through this Saturday morning.

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It's Filipino-American Night at the Hyatt's Kili Café & Terrace.

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NASA's New Horizons spacecraft got humanity's first up-close look at Pluto.

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LIFE & STYLE

After months of anticipation, Harper Lee's new novel is released.

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Local

MVA board questions Cape Air services

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Cape Air's unreliable reputation is no longer confined to just residents, as the Marianas Visitors Authority board recently questioned the poor services of Cape Air and how it impacts the Japan market.

MVA board member Jerry Tan brought up the discussion on Guam-CNMI air services, specifically Cape Air. He said Cape Air's erratic Guam-CNMI service impacts the Japan market because tourists transit from Guam to the CNMI.

Japanese tourist heading to Saipan need to transit in Guam "reliably and smoothly" but when you talk to Japanese agents about Cape Air, it's always their last resort, according to MVA board member Chris Nelson.

"Japanese agents no longer have confidence in a smooth transit from Guam to the CNMI and the concern would be taking the flight," MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said.

In the past, majority of the complaints about Cape Air's unreliable service was mostly how it impacts local residents. MVA believes that's no longer the case.

"It impacts tourism, which is MVA's responsibility. So when Cape Air cancels [its flights], it impacts the Japan market. No matter how small that number may be, it is still a negative impact and we always talk about how to address the Japan market," Tan said.

One of the biggest statements MVA has made in the past in regards to improving the Japan market is reliable air service.

Tan recommended to Tenorio to bring the issue up with Cape Air, its code-share partner, United Airlines, and the CNMI government.

"I've had discussions with United and recently they came out with added dialogues, but I will follow up with them on the second plane and the issue with the rescue flights," Tenorio said.

Aside from questioning the impact on the Japan market, Nelson questioned Cape Air's hotline and how it is answered inconsistently. He said he can't imagine someone selling a "product or giving someone a product" especially at a premium of $450 and the phone can't be answered.

"Customers need to know whether the flights are going or not," Nelson said.

Aldan-Pierce also asked who or what ultimate power or decision-maker can help push United or Cape Air to get another plane or push for someone else to provide the service.

Nelson said there isn't any interest from other airlines and that pushing Cape Air to improve its services could inevitably force them to pull out of the CNMI entirely.

"My point is that if the airfare is $99 it is one thing, but if the airfare is over $400 for a 30-minute flight, even a 30-percent load factor they will make money…I am not sure if United experienced that there isn't any interested party, but a $400 airfare is ridiculous but not getting the reliable service is another thing," Tan said.

"I think MVA needs to look at what we should be putting out because it does impact our market and you have the community behind you," he added.

ROAD PROJECT JOEL D. PINAROC

Government officials led by acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres shovel sand during the groundbreaking ceremony for an islandwide road improvement marking and signage upgrade held at the Kan Pacific grounds on Tuesday.

Widow of ex-mayor Flores opposes moving her $40M lawsuit vs bank to federal court

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The widow of former Saipan mayor Donald Glenn P. Flores has opposed MUFG Union Bank's motion to move her $40-million lawsuit against the back to the federal court.

Cecilia U. Flores is suing the bank for fraud over a bank manager's alleged unauthorized release of Donald Flores' money from his $200,000 time certificate of deposit to a person representing to be him.

Cecilia U. Flores, through counsel Juan T. Lizama, asserted that her case was filed in the Superior Court and the basis for removal under the Edge Act is not enough to give the U.S. District Court for the NMI jurisdiction over the lawsuit.

Lizama argued that Union Bank did not raise the issues of diversity of citizenship or federal incorporation with the underlying federal law violation or federal question as basis for federal jurisdiction.

Lizama said it is very clear from the facts that there is no complete diversity of citizenship to confer federal court jurisdiction since Flores and two of the defendants are from Saipan.

The lawyer said the Edge Act is not a basis for moving the case to the federal court.

Lizama said Flores' claims for fraudulent concealment does not fall within the meaning of "traditional banking activity" to require removal to federal court jurisdiction.

Cecilia Flores is suing Union Bank of California and its former employees, Victoria Borja Concepcion and Ken Kato.

Flores asked the Superior Court to hold Union Bank liable to pay her $20 million in damages. She also wants Concepcion and Kato to be held responsible for paying her $20 million in damages. She is demanding payment for court costs and attorney's fees.

MUFG Union Bank recently asked to move the lawsuit to the federal court, with MUFG Union Bank counsel Sean Frink asserting that the Edge Act expressly provides for removal of cases commenced in state court that met its jurisdictional requirements "at any time before the trial."

Frink said Kato and Concepcion agreed to move the lawsuit to the federal court.

Frink said Flores' lawsuit is related to the previously filed lawsuit filed by the former mayor against Union Bank and First Hawaiian Bank, which was dismissed when the federal court granted the bank's motion for summary judgment based upon the statute of limitation and laches grounds.

Frink said that lawsuit is pending on appeal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Frink said Flores' claims are based on the same or similar factual allegations that have been asserted against Union Bank in the pending appeal.

Donald Flores passed away in June 2014.

In 2011, Donald filed a lawsuit in federal court against Union Bank of California and FHB for allegedly refusing to return the principal and interest earned on the certificate of deposit.

DPL issues RFPs on Chalan Kanoa lots

The Department of Public Lands is inviting interested property developers or investors to bid on to two lots in the Chalan Kanoa area.

DPL said it is soliciting sealed "proposals from interested and qualified companies or individuals for the purpose of commercial leasing and developing public lands in the Lali 4 beach area."

One of the lot, Lot 060 H03, has an area of approximately 5,145 square meters; the other, Lot 047 H 04, has approximately 1,384 square meters.

Interested investors are required to pay a non-refundable $3,500 for the RFP packet, which contains instructions and information on the lands for lease.

DPL earlier said it is now going to call for "competitive bids" for new leases as well as old leases that are about to expire in the CNMI.

The DPL's decision has caused investors, including the Mariana Resort and Spa, to express concerns.

Opposition

The civic group Matua Council for Chamorro Advancement earlier opposed DPL's lease of public lands.

Liana M.S. Hofschneider, president and founding member of the civic group, sent a letter to the DPL last month opposing the lease of public lands in Chalan Kanoa and Obyan.

The civic group is opposing the lease of 8,600 square meters of public land in Chalan Kanoa to Magical Bower, LLC, negotiated by its representative, Brian P. Reyes, and the 30,248 square meters of public land in Obyan is negotiated and represented by Nikko Cid Puguon, Rocel R. Cariaso, and Jordan Danao.

"This opposition is precipitated by the fact that there are over 3,000 homestead applicants that are pending, for decades, at the DPL," Hofschneider said.

She said that "the DPL has placed a moratorium from receiving any new homestead application on Saipan.

"To date, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of eligible applicants who are prevented from participating in the homestead program because of this moratorium. Yet DPL continues to make public lands available for either leasing or land exchange purposes only." ***(Joel Pinaroc)***

Non-payment of expert hobbles Mathewson's case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The case of William Kapono Mathewson, the 36-year-old man charged with beating and stabbing Dr. Francois Claassens with a fishing spear in the neck, is not moving forward because he has yet to be examined by a psychiatrist.

At yesterday's status conference, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho set another status conference for Sept. 2, 2015, after learning that Mathewson has yet to be subjected to mental evaluation.

Chief Public Defender Douglas Hartig and Michael Sato, counsel for Mathewson, informed the court that the Hawaii psychiatrist that they are contacting is still waiting for payment for his services in three or four previous cases.

The counsels said the other option is to allow the psychiatrist to conduct the initial evaluation through Skype to save costs for the government.

Skype is currently not possible due to the Saipan-wide problems with the Internet.

Camacho explained that the court can only appoint a psychiatrist but the payment should come from the Department of Finance.

Chief Prosecutor Leonardo Rapadas agreed with the defense that the prosecution cannot move forward until the mental evaluation on Mathewson is completed.

It's the third time for the status conference in Mathewson's case to be reset because of the government's non-payment of expert.

Last April 29, Camacho granted the request of assistant public defender Sato to appoint a psychiatrist who will examine Mathewson.

Camacho approved a $1,500 cap for the expenses in appointing a psychiatrist who will evaluate Mathewson and prepare a report.

The prosecution did not oppose Sato's request.

The judge then suggested the use of Skype in conducting at least the initial evaluation to save time and expenses.

In asking for the appointment of a psychiatrist, Sato disclosed that Mathewson will rely upon the defense of insanity at the time when he committed the alleged crime.

Sato said a psychiatrist is needed to determine whether his client was suffering from a mental illness at the time of the offense.

Mathewson, a farmer/fisherman, allegedly stabbed the 60-year-old Claassens in the neck with a fishing spear and clubbed him on the head with a big pot and chain.

The brutal attack happened in the backyard of the doctor's house in Teneto Village on Rota last April 4. Mathewson's house is located near the doctor's residence.

Claassens has since recovered from his injuries.

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IT&E CEO says $2M repair costs will not be passed to customers

BY JOEL PINAROC
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REPORTER

Repairs of a damaged fiber optic cable located between Saipan and Tinian is estimated to cost IT&E some $2 million.

James Oehlerking, CEO of PTI, the mother company of IT&E, who gave the estimate, said the repair cost will not be passed on to customers.

Oehlerking faced members of the Legislature yesterday to give an update on IT&E and the service provider's ongoing repairs of the damaged submarine fiber optic cable.

The repairs will include a damaged antenna on a 15-foot microwave dish, which was supposed to serve as a backup for the submarine cable. The dish is located on Rota.

But the bulk of the repair costs will be replacement equipment that can only be acquired from the U.S. mainland. The equipment will then be flown to Taiwan and be fitted into a repair vessel.

Oehlerking said the Taiwan vessel, weather permitting, will reach the CNMI in eight days. On-site repairs will then take another three days.

But the executive was noncommittal to queries from lawmakers' question of a definite timeline as to when services will be fully restored.

Credit

Oehlerking, meanwhile, said IT&E will not charge CNMI customers for "services that have not been delivered."

He said for those who were not able to access their devices, IT&E will "work out a settlement with them, probably future credits."

"But no one is going to pay for things they did not get from IT&E," the executive stressed.

IT&E is also being urged to give back credit to the CNMI government.

Department of Finance Secretary Larissa Larson earlier said a formal letter will be sent to IT&E for the request. An assessment of the damages of the communications breakdown is also being spearheaded by the Finance Department.

Oehlerking said IT&E will look into the request.

"We will have to review that with government after this is all done and see what the impact is," he said.

Construction company fined $1K

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
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REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor has ordered ASC Arch Structure Corp. to pay a $1,000 fine for failure to post job vacancy announcements at the department's website.

DOL's Administrative Hearing Office said half of the fine must be paid no later than 30 days after the issuance of the order, while the other half may be suspended for one year, and then extinguished if ASC Arch Structure commits no further violations of CNMI labor laws.

Despite the violation, DOL's denial to issue a certificate of good standing for the company was reversed.

The order stated that, "in view of the importance of this certificate to this employer's business, no useful purpose would be served by preventing the employer from obtaining the certificate."

"This is true especially where, as here, employer has promised to correct its conduct in the future and agreed to pay a fine for past deficiencies," the order added.

The order, signed by hearing officer Jerry Cody, warned the company that if it fails to comply with the terms of the order, it will be subject to possible reinstatement of the suspended sanction as well as additional monetary sanctions.

CPA approves supplemental funds for harbor studies, ARFF repairs

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority board approved supplement budgets of $189,880 for facility roof repairs and $168,000 for feasibility studies for the rehabilitation of CNMI seaports yesterday.

The $168,000 for the seaports project is CPA's cost-share of the U.S. Army Corps-led project. The match covers fiscal year 2015.

CPA executive director Maryann Lizama told the CPA board yesterday that the Army Corps has already done a preliminary technical study on water currents at the harbors.

The Army Corps study requires a local match for this year and for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 for feasibility studies on the harbors. That means rehabilitation and contracting out the project for rehabilitations would not start until 2017.

The roof repairs funds were specifically for the Saipan ARFF building roof leak repairs, according to the CPA board agenda.

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• Saipan Shipping Co. • Marianas Resort

A. Samoa tuna cannery opposes any minimum wage Hike

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (The Samoa News/PIR)—U.S.-based Tri Marine International, whose local operations include Samoa Tuna Processors Inc. cannery, says the company was surprised by Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga's changing position on the minimum wage issue.

The governor in a June 30 letter to Delegate Aumua Amata, shared his preference on dealing with minimum wage, in which the federal government would provide a subsidy to help pay for the federally mandated wage hikes.

However, if it's not feasible, the governor said, he prefers the previous method, wherein local wages were determined by a special industry committee under the purview of the U.S. Labor Department.

According to the governor, he had asked the canneries for an assessment of the financial impact of restarting the minimum wage hike—with the next one set for Sept. 30—until the federal minimum of $7.25 per hour is reached.

The governor also requested from the canneries details of various strategies to be deployed to mitigate any negative impact caused by a wage hike in September, if the decision is made to rescind the current moratorium.

Responding to Samoa News inquiries regarding the issues raised by the governor, Tri Marine chief operating officer Joe Hamby said, "We maintain our position that any increase in the minimum wage at this time would have serious negative impacts on Tri Marine's business, Samoa Tuna Processors (STP) and the larger economic security of the region."

"We have consistently shared these concerns with the Governor's Office and last week replied to his inquiry, respectfully noting that we were surprised to learn of his changing position on this issue," Hamby said.

As Tri Marine has stated repeatedly in the past, "the global tuna industry is extremely competitive," Hamby said. "Our strongest competitors are in Southeast Asia where the costs of production—including energy and labor—are much lower than ours."

"In addition, we are also contending with a 50 percent decline in tuna prices which substantially reduces the value of our duty free advantage," he said, adding that Samoa Tuna Processors now has almost 600 employees and "we are increasing employment as we slowly ramp up the volume of our production."

"But prices are low and the contribution from the business is not yet enough to cover our significant fixed costs. We need more volume and that's going to take some time," he pointed out. "Absorbing new costs, like an increase in the minimum wage, in today's global tuna market would be disastrous not only for our business, but for the Territory."

IT&E

From Page 1

This was the second update of the day.

IT&E said no physical damage had been seen yet. On depth, IT&E said divers were out as far as 135 feet. On distance from Coral Ocean Point Resort, divers were down 300 feet.

IT&E did not disclose the name of the diving company inspecting the line, when asked.

Saipan Tribune learned that the dive company Speedy Turtle had been requested by IT&E to assist in their search for damage along the fiber optic line. It couldn't be confirmed as of press time if their staff indeed assisted IT&E yesterday.

This was IT&E's first day to dive down to the undersea fiber optic line as unruly currents and poor weather conditions prohibited earlier attempts. The Tinian and Saipan channel is known for having one of the biggest convergences of currents in the area because of its depth.

While no damage has been observed yet, a financial agreement with a repair ship in Taiwan has been finalized and the ship is being equipped before being sent to Saipan on a 10- to 12-day trip, PTI CEO Jim Oehlerking told reporters yesterday afternoon at the IT&E office in Chalan Laulau. PTI is the parent company of IT&E.

Oehlerking said the undersea cable equipment as "very specific" to "the cable and the water depth" so "you have to make sure the boat is fully equipped with everything it needs once it gets here to do the repair."

He said they have identified some of the equipment in the U.S. mainland and are flying it out to Taiwan to equip the boat to do the repair.

He said identifying the equipment and getting it to Taiwan is a "several day activity" that they are in the middle of now.

Oehlerking said they are working with TE Submarine Communications Company, a former Tyco company.

"We've already reached an agreement with them. We are finalizing a long-term contract and ongoing maintenance agreement with them," he said.

He added the company has two representatives flying to Saipan yesterday. One came in today, he said.

"The contract was agreed to" and the company is "fully engaged and active," Oehlerking said, adding they are finalizing some of the aspects of the contract but these are not limiting factors right now.

Oehlerking said they contacted multiple ships, including NTT Docomo, for the cable repair. The closest one they were able to find was in Taiwan, he said.

"We picked the one that was currently available," he said

On current Internet connectivity, Oehlerking said in general terms they have one gigabyte of capacity operating from the temporary microwave link that was repaired recently.

The fiber optic cable that was damaged was capable of 10 gigabytes and IT&E was using nine megabytes, he said.

"Oddly enough, we were in the middle of upgrading the cable… Once the break is repaired, we will be able to have double capacity," he said.

Residents to visit Fena Cave on US Naval Base Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—As part of Liberation Day events, a site visit will be held at the Fena Cave located at the Naval Munitions Annex on U.S. Naval Base Guam on July 19.

The visit, coordinated between Naval Base Guam and the Agat Mayor's Office, will precede a memorial held for Fena Cave Massacre victims at Old Agat Cemetery. Attendees are asked to meet at 8am at the cemetery where they will board a bus and proceed to the cave site.

After the cave visit, a memorial will be held at 10am at the cemetery, followed by a luncheon hosted by the mayor's office.

On July 19, 1944 the Fena Cave Massacre occurred, when Japanese soldiers killed more than 30 young men and women from Agat and Sumay with grenades and bayonets in the caves near Fena Lake. During the past several years, the NBG commanding officer has invited the victims' families to visit the cave as part of Liberation Day ceremonies. ***(PR)***

TORRES

From Page 1

Torres and Attorney General Edward Manibusan have been conducting consultations since last week regarding the possible state of emergency declaration.

On July 8, the IT&E-owned fiber optic cable that links Saipan to the rest of the world was reportedly heavily damaged, causing the loss of mobile telephone services and Internet access throughout the Commonwealth.

The outage effectively caused businesses—including banks, financial institutions, and remittance services—to grind to a halt.

One of the most heavily hit government agencies was the Department of Finance, which had to suspend direct deposits of the payroll for thousands of government employees.

In the state of emergency declaration, Torres said the "disruption of critical infrastructure services threaten the public peace, health, and safety of the Commonwealth's residents."

With the declaration, the Commonwealth Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office has been tasked to provide assistance and support, and has been granted a temporary exemption from any Commonwealth regulation that "would tend to prevent, hinder, or delay any action it deems necessary" when assisting and supporting the Commonwealth in its recovery from critical infrastructure disruption.

Manibusan earlier said a state of emergency will give the CNMI government "the ability to mobilize resources and mobilize people to go to Tinian to do their work there." Guam is also a possible location, he said.

After consultations with the Office of the Governor, the Commonwealth Homeland Security and Emergency Management Office will be tasked to temporarily transfer the "direction, personnel, and functions of government agencies to facilitate its response and recovery programs."

This agency will also be tasked to establish a joint task force with IT&E to provide the government with regular updates. A complete report from the agency is expected to be submitted to the Office of the Governor on or before Aug. 31.

Updates

Oehlerking said he gave Torres updates on the status of the damaged fiber optic cable and a microwave backup system in a meeting yesterday morning.

Oehlerking clarified that the damage to the cable was detected by a laser beam shot through the cable. He said through the laser beam, 12 strands of the fiber optic cable were found to have been damaged.

He also clarified that IT&E still has no visual on the extent of the damage to the cable and, as of yesterday, divers have been contracted to provide footage.

Oehlerking dismissed claims that a "car-sized" boulder flattened the fiber optic cable.

After his meeting with the acting governor, Oehlerking faced lawmakers yesterday on Capital Hill to give a status report on IT&E's ongoing repair efforts.

Rep. Francis Taimanao (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the House Committees on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications, convened the meeting with members of the House.

Sen. Sixto Igisomar (R-Saipan) initiated a separate meeting with Oehlerking after the House meeting.

Oehlerking was not able to give a definitive answer to the lawmakers' question of how soon services—particularly Internet access—will be fully restored.

A visibly agitated Rep. Joseph "Lee Pan" Guerrero (R-Saipan) lambasted the investors of IT&E and its team of engineers for failing to provide specific updates.

According to Oehlerking, IT&E has more than 60 engineers on island.

The CEO said a repair vessel from Taiwan will be carrying equipment to be used for the damaged cable.

But the CNMI has to wait, because the vessel is expected to arrive in about eight days, weather permitting.

"The travel time for the vessel is eight days, if the weather permits. On site repairs will take about three days," Oehlerking disclosed.

But he emphasized that "certain variances and variables" does not allow him to make a prediction as to when services will be fully restored.

He disclosed that the supposed backup system, a 15-foot microwave dish, is also being repaired, particularly its antenna.

Oehlerking told lawmakers that "things are not back to normal" and that there will still be intermittent outages.

More bandwidth

Answering queries from lawmakers, Oehlerking said the CNMI government uses a DSL system like the rest of the Commonwealth.

Igisomar particularly expressed his concern on bandwidth allocation, particularly for the CNMI government.

As such, IT&E cannot just allocate more bandwidth to the CNMI government, unlike federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Aviation Administration, which use "virtual private networks" or "VPNs" that can be more "flexible" when it comes to bandwidth allocation.

Oehlerking said IT&E is committed "to pour" resources to restore services.

In light of the massive breakdown, there have been calls to allow other investors to lay down their own submarine fiber optic cables for the CNMI.

A meeting between Guam's GTA and lawmakers has been set this Friday.

SURVIVING

From Page 1

there are so much cars, so many people, and everyone was there. Oh wow! Where did these people come from?" Aurora David said.

The change was also evident in restaurants and bars, where people could be seen actually talking to one another and sharing a lot of laughs instead of being busy updating their social media status.

Betty, who asked that she be identified only by her first name, said she actually left her phone at home for the first time and just socialized with friends.

Fr. Ryan Jimenez, the apostolic administrator for the Diocese of Chalan Kanoa, raised the same point during his homily last Sunday, when he said that the Internet outage has given people the time to reconnect to others and to God.

Quality time

David and her group of friends including Noemie Caacbay and Jannella Nelmida did more than just enjoy the beach that day.

"There's no Internet, so my friends and I decided to get together," David said "We went around the island. We went to Banzai and Suicide Cliff."

And even though they live on the island, it was a different Sunday and a different experience for her.

"Good thing because we don't have phones, we weren't on the phone all the time. We're just like, 'oh that's so awesome. We get to see more things,'" David said.

"It's like we're just there talking," she added.

Their afternoon did not stop there. They also paddled, swam, and kayaked as well as watched DVDs together.

"It was an awesome weekend," David remarked, despite the loss of Internet.

"It's like we're just there in the moment," she said, "It made me more focused on what's there instead of looking at my computer."

For Caacbay, it was sort of a vacation from the pressure of minding college applications and requirements.

"[No Internet] wasn't really a burden to us. We took advantage of the outdoor stuff. We enjoyed nature," Caacbay said.

Nelmida said she felt she actually had more free time.

"I had more free time because usually we're just doing something on the Internet," Nelmida said.

"We've been going out a lot," she added.

More productive time

For mom Vivian Soh, no Internet meant less Netflix time and more creative time for her daughter.

"I told her we cannot [watch Netflix] but we can do other things like drawing and reading," Soh said.

Rotary Club Saipan president Curtis Dancoe also shared that he actually went back to reading the newspaper when the Internet was down and was going to his office earlier.

Chamber of Commerce president Alex Sablan said he got to read his books.

For other people, it meant having the time to do more household chores or clean the car or even cook for themselves.

Carnival rides at Liberation Festivities in flux

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

In lieu of carnival rides coming from China, Skywalker Communications Group is now scrambling to ship carnival rides from neighboring Guam after the former's shipment was cancelled due to back-to-back storms in the CNMI.

Skywalker Communications president Hu Bo announced in a press conference last month that carnival rides were being shipped from China. However, Skywalker Communications business director Elvis Yu said yesterday the rides didn't come in due to the recent bad weather.

In the past two weeks, Tropical Storm Chan-Hom and Typhoon Nangka scuttled the 2015 Liberation Day parade twice and the Liberation Festival grounds only opened last Tuesday, July 14.

Yu noted that the first shipment of amusement booth games have arrived but are still at the Port of Saipan in Puerto Rico, being checked by the CNMI Customs Division.

"The amusement games are from China and Customs need to check the container. The first ship has arrived but the [carnival] rides from China are really hard to bring in because of the weather," Yu said.

"We have spoken with Guam on the rides. They haven't decided yet and we need to check the equipment there if it is possible and need to finalize and process everything," he added.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang confirmed that the amusement games are in but there aren't any carnival rides.

Apatang said that they will have a meeting today, Thursday, to finalize the whole Liberation Festivities and resolve issues as well as update preparations for the Liberation Day parade this Saturday, July 18.

The parade route from Quartermaster Road to American Memorial Park will be closed at 7:30am and the parade will begin at 9am. A total of15 floats and 19 marchers are confirmed for the parade.

ON REQUEST TO SET ASIDE 2002 ATTEMPTED RAPE CONVICTION

Defendant's former lawyer, ICE invited to be heard

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Superior Court has invited former assistant public defender Jeffrey Moots and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-Immigration and Customs Enforcement to participate in the hearing of a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia who is asking the court to set aside his attempted rape conviction because Moots, his then-counsel, allegedly failed to provide advice that his guilty plea would make him deportable.

In separate orders issued Tuesday, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho invited Moots and U.S. DHS-ICE to submit an *amicus curiae* and/or sworn declaration.

Amicus curiae (friend of the court) refers to a brief filed in court by any entity that is not a party to the case.

Camacho said Moots and DHS-ICE are not required to file any pleadings.

Any filings, he said, shall be due on or before Sept. 4, 2015.

A motion hearing on defendant Seremea Isy Nowell's motion will be held on Sept. 16, 2015, at 1:30pm.

Camacho said Nowell's case has far-reaching ramification beyond this individual case.

The judge said as any findings by the court may or not give rise to a collateral disciplinary complaint that may spill over and reflect upon Moots, at the very least an opportunity should be given to him to be heard on this matter.

With respect to DHS-ICE, Camacho said immigration issues were once under the jurisdiction of the CNMI and now under the United States, and this case straddles the two different jurisdictions.

At the very least, Camacho said, an opportunity should be given to DHS-ICE to be heard on this matter.

On Feb. 6, 2, 2002, Nowell pleaded guilty to attempted rape pursuant to a plea agreement with the government. He was sentenced to two years in prison and served the jail term.

Nowell is now facing deportation by DHS-ICE after Immigration Judge Clarence M. Wagner Jr. issued a decision on Jan. 13, 2015, ordering him to be deported to the Federated States of Micronesia.

Last May 21, the 54-year-old Nowell, through counsel Pamela Brown-Blackburn, filed in court an emergency petition for a writ of error *coram nobis* to vacate his conviction.

Writ of error *coram nobis* refers to an extraordinary court order that is issued only where the circumstances compel such action to achieve justice.

Blackburn said the writ "provides a remedy for those suffering from the lingering collateral consequences of an unconstitutional or unlawful conviction based on errors of fact and egregious legal errors."

Blackburn said in Nowell's case, then assistant public defender Moots made a critical error by advising the defendant to accept a plea agreement in which he pleaded guilty to attempted rape—a felony offense—in exchange for the dismissal of three other criminal charges.

Blackburn said the error results in a manifest injustice and severe consequences because, unbeknownst to Nowell, the plea made him deportable under both CNMI immigration law, which were applicable at the time, and under federal law, which became applicable on Nov. 28, 2009.

Nowell has resided in the CNMI since the early 1990s and had adopted a U.S. citizen son, who is now 9 years old.

Nowell has only distant relatives in Chuuk, FSM. His home island of Mama is a weeklong boat ride from the main island of Weno.

Blackburn said to allow the 2002 plea of guilty to a crime without being properly advised of any adverse immigration consequences constitutes a violation of the NMI Constitution, the Sixth Amendment, and the Commonwealth Rules of Criminal Procedure.

In his declaration, Nowell said that, on Feb. 5, 2002, Moots told him to plead guilty because he has no choice since it was his last court appearance.

"When I tried to object, Mr. Moots said this was my only chance," Nowell said.

MVA waiting on response, hopeful on Jeju charter from Osaka

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Marianas Visitors Authority is still waiting for a response from Jeju Air whether it will launch charter flights from Osaka directly to the CNMI—a move that could very well bring the Japan market back up.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio said they are still waiting for a response from the budget airline whether Jeju Air will fly to either Guam or the CNMI out of Osaka.

"We were hoping that some decision would be made last week…but we have done our due diligence and we've had commitment from the hoteliers, financial commitments in MVA and travel partners in Osaka [for Jeju Air] to choose the CNMI," Tenorio said.

MVA board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce earlier told *Saipan Tribune* that MVA offices in the CNMI, Japan, and Korea are working in close collaboration with hoteliers and Osaka travel agents to build a strong case for Jeju Air to launch a flight from Osaka to Saipan.

However, Jeju Air's headquarters in Seoul, Korea, would make the final determination.

Pierce said MVA continues to reach out to other airlines, including low cost carriers, and is collaborating with Delta Air Lines and major Japanese travel agents to pick the market back up.

Securing low-cost carriers that will fly to the Commonwealth and adding more hotel rooms are key to boosting Japanese arrivals to the islands.

The Japan market has seen a precipitous decline in arrivals since Japan Airlines cancelled flights to the Commonwealth. The Japan market is expected to go down further, as Delta Air Lines will reduce its flights to Saipan this winter.

The lack of airlift to replace the loss of Japan Airlines service from Osaka and Narita and the loss of Delta Air Lines service from Nagoya means that CNMI arrival numbers from Japan have fallen steadily since then.

The Fukushima earthquake and tsunami in 2011 and the consumption tax hike in Japan in April 2014 also significantly impacted Japanese visitor numbers, reaching a low of 110,234 visitors to the CNMI last year.

MVA board member Jerry Tan asked Tenorio whether the Governor's Office has issued a letter of support for MVA's bid to lure Jeju Air to choose the CNMI for its Osaka charter.

Tenorio said the administration did and addressed it to the president of Jeju Air. MVA hopes that Osaka flights could be restored when Jeju Air makes its decision.

HUNTING JON PEREZ
A bird glides freely near the Garapan Fishing Base as it looks for food.

Riegel: No actions on per diem rates

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The closed-door session over Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board expenditures last week did not bring any changes to per diem rates for board members, acting CUC executive director John Riegel clarified with *Saipan Tribune*.

Counsel James Sirok told board members last week there were some concerns he would like to bring to the board in executive session dealing with how their per diem is spread out.

Sought for an update on actions after this discussion, Riegel said, "There have been no changes to the per diem" and the whole discussion was just about how board members wanted to know if they were getting close to exceeding their budget.

The CUC board has overspent by $17,704 its year-to-date budget of $24,925 nine months into the fiscal year, with most money going to "per diem" costs for board members.

Per diem is reported to be around $175 for every four hours for a board member.

Riegel said the discussion was over "the amount that has been spent and where the budget stands relative to what was spent."

The CUC board also asked management to cover the cost chair Adelina Roberto took to San Francisco to sign a settlement agreement between CUC and a company.

Riegel said Roberto took the trip to California to appear in court and the cost was charged against the budget for the board staff meetings, but because it was stipulated order related, the board asked last week that the cost not be charged against that budget but against the administrative budget.

Last week, the CUC board voted to task management to come up with a recommendation to cover its current shortfall plus another three months of additional funding to take them through the end of the year covering potential per diems, honorarium, car rental, airline tickets, and per diem.

The CUC board has held eight meetings in less than two months. Their annual budget is $33,300. As of July 7, the CUC board has spent $42,679.31.

If the CUC board were to halt expenses today, they would still have exceeded by $9,379.31 their budget with three months left in the fiscal year.

The CUC board announced earlier this week a personnel committee meeting today.

Woman's conviction for lying in passport application affirmed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has affirmed the conviction of a Chinese woman who conspired with her brother-in-law to lie in an application for a U.S. passport for her daughter.

The Ninth Circuit judges ruled that there was enough evidence to support the jury's verdict against Aifang Ye on both charges of conspiracy to make a false statement on a passport application and making a false statement in a passport application.

The judges said the evidence showed that Ye and her brother-in-law, Zhenyan Cheng, conspired for Cheng to make a statement that he knew to be untrue when applying with Ye for a passport for Ye's daughter.

The judges said Ye and Cheng knew the information Cheng would provide was false, and that she aided him in providing it.

A federal jury found Ye guilty but acquitted Cheng of the same charges on June 15, 2012.

The jurors unanimously found that Ye and Cheng went to the Saipan Passport Office and applied for a U.S. passport on behalf of a minor child, with Cheng posing as the father of the child.

Ye, through counsel David G. Banes, appealed, asking the Ninth Circuit to reverse her convictions.

Defense attorney Bruce Berline successfully defended Cheng.

Assistant attorney generals Garth R. Backe and Ross Naughton prosecuted the case.

Banes, as counsel for Ye, had argued that there was not enough evidence that Ye and Cheng entered into an unlawful agreement because there was no evidence that Ye or Cheng knew that what they agreed to do was unlawful.

The Ninth Circuit judges ruled, however, that since violating Section 1542 does not require specific intent, the jury did not need to find that either Cheng or Ye knew that what they were doing was unlawful.

The statute prohibits providing false information in a passport application.

"Ye's sufficiency-of-the-evidence arguments challenging the conspiracy conviction therefore fail," the judges pointed out.

Ye's counsel also argued that her aiding and abetting conviction should be overturned because Cheng was acquitted of providing false information in a passport application and because there was not enough evidence to support her conviction for aiding and abetting the falsification of a passport application.

The judges disagreed, saying Ye's conviction is not precluded by Cheng's acquittal. They said a jury's acquittal of the principal on the underlying offense charge does not preclude the jury from convicting another defendant for aiding and abetting the acquitted principal.

Moreover, the judges said, there was enough evidence to sustain Ye's guilty verdict for aiding and abetting Cheng's violation of the law.

The judges said it also does not matter that the jury acquitted Cheng of conspiracy and providing false information on a passport application.

The judges said Ye's argument that the U.S. government's failure to call certain translators as witnesses violated her rights under the Confrontation Clause is foreclosed by precedent.

According to the U.S. government, Ye came to Saipan on Sept. 12, 2011, to give birth. Her husband came with her but soon left on Sept. 16, 2011.

Under the terms of her parole, Ye was allowed to remain in the CNMI until Oct. 12, 2011.

After giving birth to her daughter on Feb. 28, 2012, Ye sought a U.S. passport for the child.

Under federal law, both of the minor's parents or legal guardians must execute the application on behalf of the child. Both parents or legal guardians must appear personally in the passport office to execute the application.

The U.S. government, however, pointed out that there are some exceptions to this "two-party appearance rule"; among them is the option of obtaining a "notarized statement or affidavit from the non-applying parent or legal guardian, consenting to the issuance of the passport."

The child is Ye's second child and she understood that having two children is against Chinese law.

The prosecution alleged that, fearing trouble under Chinese law if she obtained from her husband a notarized statement or affidavit pertaining to Ye's daughter, she decided to have Cheng pose as the father of his brother's child.

Cheng's brother, Xigao, has not since returned to the Commonwealth after departing the CNMI, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement special agent Ryan K. Faulkner in an affidavit filed in court.

Special agent Faulkner stated that they discovered the filing of false statement after they conducted a surveillance of a car that dropped Cheng, Ye, and her infant child at the Saipan Passport Office on March 29, 2012.

SUPERVISION WEEK FERDIE DE LA TORRE

CNMI Adult Probation supervisor Oscar C. Torres serves as the master of ceremony during Friday's proclamation signing for Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week at the CNMI Supreme Court. Listening to Torres, from left, are Fr. James Balajadia, Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo, acting governor Ralph Torres, and Chief Justice Alexandro Castro.

CPA to extend Saipan Stevedore lease

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority board will extend by 10 years their lease with Saipan Stevedore Co., the main shipping company at the Port of Saipan.

The lease was set to expire on July 21, 2015. The 10-year extension will push this to 2025.

CPA lawyer Matthew Gregory shared his written opinion on the renewal of the lease with the CPA board yesterday. The shipping company has exercised its option for an additional 10 years on its lease.

According to Gregory, after the 10 years there would have to be a new lease agreement. This mean stevedore services would then be open for new proposals.

Public Law 12-48 mandates that the maximum lease CPA can issue is a 40-year lease, he said. The renewal will bring the company to the end of this 40-year period.

"Well before that lease expires, we need to assess how we are going to proceed. But I would recommend that the board approve the renewal of the lease," Gregory said.

When asked by a board member about negotiating a new lease, Gregory said that per the lease there was an automatic provision that makes no room for negotiation unless CPA tried to argue before a judge that they were prejudiced in some way.

On seeking other proposals, Gregory told the board that this process should be done in advance, or at least five years in advance in 2020. "Essentially, this is one entity that is loading and unloading everything at the port," he said.

Jury renders guilty verdict in sex abuse case

The Office of the Attorney General concluded the trial of Jose I. Santos, also known as Grandpa Ping, on Wednesday, July 8. A jury found Santos guilty of committing two counts of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree. As a result, Santos faces a maximum possible sentence of 60 years behind bars.

"I am pleased with the verdict," said Attorney General Edward Manibusan. "We will continue to seek justice for victims of sexual abuse. We seek the community's stand against sexual violence, most especially for those who are unable to defend themselves."

Assistant attorneys general Shannon Foley and Emily Cohen prosecuted the case on behalf of the Commonwealth government, which began on Monday, July 6. Immediately following closing arguments the jurors deliberated. On Wednesday morning, the jurors reached a guilty verdict.

Foley said: "We were fortunate with the panel of jury in this trial and impressed with the way the CNMI views these cases. …The short amount of time it took the jurors to reach a verdict indicates a decision was apparent."

"I hope for the sake of the victim and her family that after two full trials, they can put this behind them and move on," Foley added.

Manibusan said: "I would like to thank assistant attorneys general Shannon Foley and Emily Cohen for their hard work in bringing the defendant to justice. Further, the Department of Public Safety deserves thanks for their thorough investigation and persistence in this case."

If you are a victim or a person you know has been victimized by sexual assaul, call the Office of the Attorney General at 237-7600, or the Department of Public Safety at 664-9000. ***(OAG)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Marriage Encounter to host Talaricos' visit

CNMI Marriage Encounter is hosting Section 12 Ecclesial Couple Joe and Sue Talarico's visit to Saipan on July 21-24, 2015. We are inviting all Encountered couples, priests, and religious to join our two evening events:

■ M.E. Community Mass on Wednesday, July 22, 6pm at Santa Soledad Parish and CNMI Area Leadership Selection Process right after Mass.

■ Section 12 Community Enrichment on Thursday, July 23, 6:30pm at Joeten DaiDai Social Hall. Joe and Sue Talarico will be facilitating this enrichment.

Join our CNMI M.E. *familia* welcome Joe and Sue to Saipan. Please bring a dish to share for each event. Call CNMI Ecclesial Team Cathy Cepeda at 483-7000 or Pali Ike Ayuyu at 483-4543 if you have any questions. ***(PR)***

Survivors, caregivers support meeting today

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the Commonwealth Cancer Association monthly support meeting today, July 16, 5:30pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. The guest speaker will be Ronald Sablan, Medical Referral director, Office of the Governor and the topic is "Medical Referral Program Update." To RSVP or for more information, call CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com or cca@ccamarianas.org. ***(PR)***

Statewide Independent Living Council meeting rescheduled

The Statewide Independent Living Council's Third General Membership Meeting scheduled for July 9, from 1pm to 3pm, at the Rota Bay View Hotel has been rescheduled for July 23, 2015, same time and place. Agenda remains unchanged. For more information, contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, P.O. Box 501521, Saipan, MP 96950; Navy Hill, Buildings N2 & N4; voice: 322-6537/8; TTY: 322-6449; fax: 322-6536; email: nmidir@ovrgov.net; website: www.ovrgov.net. ***(SILC)***

Military training at Warning Area 517, FDM

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Marines and U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on July 14-17 from 10:30am to 8:30pm. The general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the areas during the dates and times indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(JRM)***

2nd Annual International Festival of Cultures set

The 2nd Annual International Festival of Cultures will be held Aug. 22 and 29 and Sept. 5, 12, 19, and 26 at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan and will celebrate the cultural diversity of the Northern Mariana Islands, with special emphasis on the indigenous cultures of Micronesia. Cultural groups are encouraged to contact Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects Specialist Ryan Calvo at rcalvo@mymarianas.com or 664-3210 to participate. ***(PR)***

WOMEN IN THE KNOW: Abigail Baker

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

Author's note: In its newest 10-part series, called Women In The Know, Saipan Tribune *is featuring leading women in higher education every week. Rica Dela Cruz, who will be earning her master's in Public Health from the University of California, Los Angeles, was previously featured. This week's feature is Tinian native Abigail Antolyn Evangelista Baker.*

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Thirty-one-year-old Abigail Antolyn Evangelista Baker.

Chief Warrant Officer II Abigail Baker has served in the U.S Army for over 10 years. The 31-year-old Tinian lass recently returned from deployment to Liberia, Africa, in March.

There was a strong incentive in high school for Baker to join the armed forces. She was an ardent student athlete at Tinian High School and the cadet battalion commander for three years before graduating in 2002. Baker was also the vice president of the National Honor Society and a member of the mock trial team, which represented the islands at the national level.

"I attribute much of my success to the strict house rules, family oriented gatherings, political gathering experiences, my parents' sacrifices, beliefs and support for education and youth programs on the island," she told *Saipan Tribune*. "The countless people I've come across were inspiring and mostly my son, Dre-Joey Anthony, for reasons of a better future, he has my heart. They all in some way embedded pride, good morals and values."

Baker continued to have a full plate after high school. After graduation, she attended the University of Maryland University College online while serving in Mannheim, Germany and Washington, D.C. In 2008, she earned her A.A. in General Studies and later graduated with a bachelor's degree in Sociology.

"While stationed in D.C., I was able to attend my graduation on the main campus in Maryland. I have plans to pursue a master's degree with Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, majoring in Business Administration next spring," she said.

Baker is expected to graduate in the next three years with an M.B.A.

From enlisting in 2004 and being an honor graduate out of basic training to earning the title of distinguished honor graduate in 2013 after completing a human resource technician course, Baker has moved up the ranks while in academia. Just this year, Baker was promoted to her current rank.

One of her most notable accomplishments include being nominated to executive assistant to the commander of the White House Communications Agency, traveling with the agency as an airport presidential communications officer and assistance operations noncommissioned-officer.

Entering the service

"The United States Army is one of many options to pursue your education while earning a paycheck," she said.

A great benefit and advantage to "marrying your career choice and secondary education," she added, is that it left no burden on her parents, Antonio and Evelyn Evangelista.

"Best of all, it is a three- to six-year contract at most each enlistment. I met with the local recruiting office from Guam during their visit to Tinian late 2003 to weigh my options. A fit test, medical screening, written test, and career counseling and later you are signing about 10 pages of your contract," she explained.

Baker said she entered the human resources field because she understands the value of people, whom she considers the No. 1 resource.

"I meet new people, create systems to make environments better, provide opportunities, and run analysis for better customer service. It takes a people person to run a business!"

Baker's ultimate goal is to pursue as much education that the Army can provide before she retires.

"Retiring at 40 sounds so good right now!" she said. "I do plan on returning home to teach and possibly run for office and maybe hold the position as the CNMI representative in Washington, D.C., 20 to 30 years down the road."

Baker calls on young local student to never settle for less.

"…Enjoy your youth but pause every once in a while and think about the next five years. Reach out and talk to those that have left the rock, returned, and served," she added. "We can all learn from each other's life experiences. Best of all there will always be an islander wherever you are."

Baker is married to James D. Baker and has two sons, Dre-Joey and Zachary Dalton.

Her siblings are also serving in the military: Capt. Adrian Evangelista and SSgt. Atonio Evangelista are stationed in Okinawa, Japan, while Sgt. Aran R. Evangelista serves in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Baker's family plans to have a reunion this August after seven years of being apart.

Quarantine, screening still ongoing at Saipan airport

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

Despite limitations brought about by the "network blackout," the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is continuing its operations to screen passengers at the airport for the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS.

According to Warren Villagomez, CHCC Public Health and Hospital Preparedness Program director, the MERS screening operation at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport is ongoing and they have no issues with communications.

"We have been responding and meeting and there wasn't any communication barriers," Villagomez said. "We have been working and focusing on the MERS issue and it is still ongoing and the latest development is that the identified staff has completed the badge process, meaning having access through the airport and the secure side of the airport."

He noted that the construction of an isolation, screening, quarantine site at the airport is ongoing and should be done soon.

» Construction of isolation area close to completion

"The effort is there on CHCC's side and management. So we can shift the room into isolation but also making sure it doesn't cross-contaminate. The recommendation is to identify, mitigate, and then transport to an area where it is suitable for longer-term care," he said.

The site is called an "All Hazard Screen Disease Area" that not only will be used for MERS but also other outbreaks that could possibly enter the CNMI. CHCC medical director Dr. John Doyle said the area had been designed and designated.

"So we're set up at between arrival gate [of the Saipan International Airport] and the CNMI Customs and Border Protection. So we'll have the questionnaires coming out of the plane if it becomes necessary as a line of defense. The second line of defense is us, screening anything that comes back positive coming off the plane," Doyle said.

Doyle said that CBP is the third line of defense. There are also medical supplies in the area but not the whole equipment until construction is done.

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC §9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold a Special Meeting on Friday, July 17, 2015, at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Conference Room.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
a. Call to Order
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
d. Adoption of Minutes
II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
III. REPORTS
a. Chair's Report
b. Executive Director's Report
IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
a. Management of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino
V. NEW BUSINESSES
a. Ratification of Table Movement Requests
b. Licensing Matters
i. Casino Key/Casino Employee License Applications
ii. Hotel Registrations
iii. Casino Service Industry License Applications
iv. Casino License/Suitability Applications
c. MOU re TEC application process
d. MOU re Consultants
VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION
VII. MISCELLANEOUS/ADMNISTRATIVE MATTERS
VIII. ADJOURNMENT

[1]Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.

[2]Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

Procurement And Supply
CNMI Government

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP: RFP15-CHCC/CGC-109
SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 03, 2015 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"EVALUATION SERVICES FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION, COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER"

Copies of the RFP packet may be picked-up at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base Dr., Saipan, during regular working hours.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any imperfections in any proposal if to do so shall be in the best interest of the CNMI. All proposals shall become the exclusive property of the CNMI government.

/s/ **ESTHER L. MUNA**
Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
YANO Enterprises, Inc.

Assistant Manager (1): Be able to assist the general manager in the supervision of business establishment to ensure the restaurant & stores efficiency & profitable operations; work closely with the personnel in preparation & processing of reservations, greets & answers customers inquiry, patrons complaints & resolve problems. Prepare advertising campaigns of the restaurant & stores to attract customers. Assist in doing daily inventory of foods, merchandise and assets of the business. Duties include but are not limited to delegating authority & assigning responsibilities, reviewing financial transactions & monitoring budget limitations, & be able to present written & oral reports on the company's financial & operational status. Must have Japanese oral skills & knowledge of Japanese food products.

Restaurant Supervisor (1): Must be qualified in restaurant operations, customer service, menu planning, & reservation operations. Must be responsible for the supervision of staff as to dining areas cleanliness in appearance & outside grounds. Ensure any customers issues are addressed immediately and resolved in a manner which exceeds the customer's expectation. Also need to have basic Japanese oral skills. Must have an extensive knowledge of Japanese food products & be able to make orders & preparations.

Accountant (2): Must be efficient in handling financial records, statements, & reports. Have knowledge on all Taxes computation & filing. Must be able to budget & estimate purchasing costs & requisitions of merchandise necessary in the company.

Restaurant Waitress (5): Greeting Customers. Must be able to speak basic Japanese & efficient English & have a friendly & outgoing personality. Should be knowledgeable of the restaurant dishes, familiar with the entire menu the establishment offers. Can introduce & recommend daily specials as well as the restaurant's regular menu items. Continued services after the meal have been served and accept payments & other duties related.

Cook (4): Must be experienced & skilled in preparing Japanese cuisine including but not limited to sushi, sashimi, & tempura. Can prepare all menu items according to quantity menus, must know cutting and preparation techniques for each type of fish used in sushi rolls as well as how to prepare rice, sauces and seasonal ingredients, must ensure that ingredients are fresh, colorful and always in stock, that the all-important knives are sharp and clean, and that all equipment is in working order. Must be able to maintain kitchen & observe safety & sanitary food handling practices as well as other related duties.

General Maintenance (3): Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and flexible in work hours. Duties may involve skills in electrical, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, painting, landscape or maintain grounds of property using hand or power tools or equipment. Can typically perform variety of task such as sod laying, mowing, trimming, planting, watering, fertilizing, digging, raking and installing , repairing buildings, floors or stairs.

Additional Requirements: All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain required food handler health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transportation and must agree to drug test. Can work in flexible hours including weekends and night time.
Applicants of positions listed above except Restaurant Waitress (3 months work experience) are required to have a minimum of 2-4 years experience. Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Restaurant in Coral Tree Avenue, Garapan.

We are an equal opportunity employer. Qualified applicants will be considered. Applications can be picked up at Kinpachi Restaurant in Coral Tree Avenue, Garapan. No phone calls please.

Agricultural emergency loans now available

Commercial agricultural producers in Guam who were negatively impacted by Typhoon Dolphin may be eligible for Emergency Loans through the United State Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

Eligible producers can borrow up to 100 percent of actual production or physical losses to a maximum amount of $500,000 at a low interest rate. Farm Service Agency will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. Deadline to apply is Feb. 5, 2016.

In addition to the Emergency Loan program, FSA has a variety of programs to help eligible farmers and ranchers recover from a wide range of adversities.

The availability of Emergency Loans was triggered by the amendment to the Presidential Disaster Declaration, which now includes public assistance to further support the recovery of those adversely affected by the lava flows.

For more information about Emergency Loans, contact the FSA Guam County Office at 472-7568 for an appointment or visit the FSA's website at www.fsa.usda.gov/hi. ***(USDA)***

Underwood testifies on energy challenges of remote areas

MANGILAO, Guam—University of Guam president Dr. Robert Underwood testified at an oversight hearing last Tuesday, July 14, at the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC. The purpose of the hearing was to enable the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to receive testimony on remote and isolated energy systems, including energy and infrastructure challenges and opportunities in Alaska, Hawaii, and the U.S. territories.

Underwood presented ideas on how energy issues in remote, isolated communities can be holistically addressed. He shed light on the challenges these communities face, and given their similarities, what solutions may be proposed. Underwood also shared effective examples of reducing energy costs and improving service reliability, as well as provided insights into how federal agencies affect the local government's and community's ability to address areas of concern.

"It is a great honor to be invited to testify before the committee, and there's an even greater opportunity to talk about both Guam's successes and needs on such a tremendous platform," said Underwood. "This hearing [was] held in the context of the ENR's work on comprehensive energy legislation, so there could be potential to draft meaningful legislation that may eventually impact our island."

Underwood established the Center for Island Sustainability at the University of Guam in 2009. The CIS is the focal point for research and outreach activities for the University on sustainability issues as they pertain to energy, the natural environment, culture and the economy. It has sponsored five annual conferences, which annually draws hundreds of participants. He has also been co-chair of the Guam Energy Task Force for five years. The task force developed the Guam Strategic Energy Plan. ***(UOG)***

More TV stations to air The Pacific Way show

SUVA, Fiji—In a timely gesture, two more television stations in the Pacific Island region will soon be airing the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's flagship TV show, The Pacific Way.

As the show celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, the addition of Click TV in Papua New Guinea and Marshall Islands Local TV in the Republic of the Marshall Islands brings to 20 the number of stations currently broadcasting the iconic program.

"We're saving the show for the nationwide launch of PNG TV, which now sits on our 24-channel digital platform in Port Moresby," the managing director of Click TV PNG, Richard Broadbridge, said.

"The Pacific Way will be an important feature in our post-Pacific Games schedule and we look forward to providing our growing PNG audience a weekly snapshot of their neighbors in the region," he said.

Marshall Islands Local TV Station in the Northern Pacific will also soon air The Pacific Way.

Peter Ray of the Marshall Islands Local TV Station, run by the National Telecommunication Authority, said the program offers great insights into the challenges, solutions, and successes being experienced in different parts of the Pacific.

"The Pacific Way also shares the different cultures to our people and we hope our younger generation will be more educated about development issues by watching the show," Ray added.

The weekly half-hour program presents a wide range of informative and entertaining stories about the Pacific for the Pacific, with a focus on development in the region.

The Pacific Way team leader at SPC, Joji Nabalarua, said the show's longevity and popularity were only possible through the ongoing interest of broadcasters and the support of TV viewers across the Pacific and beyond.

"We thank all our loyal broadcast partners and viewers, and welcome Click TV and Marshall Islands Local TV and their audiences to The Pacific Way family at SPC," Nabalarua said.

"Through the show, SPC gives Pacific people a voice, allowing them to tell their own stories and share their experiences in a rapidly-changing region, against the backdrop of our organisation's development support," he said.

Production of The Pacific Way by SPC began in 1995 with seed funding from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, and with set props such as tapa cloth, fishing nets and carvings donated by various Pacific community members. ***(SPC)***

EPISODE LIST

To view the first four episodes of the show for 2015, see *The Pacific Way* playlist on YouTube:

- Episode 1: Youth at Work & 20th Anniversary Highlights 3rd SPC Conference https://youtu.be/7UtXfJlyE2c
- Episode 2: Empowering Communities in RMI, Palau & FSM https://youtu.be/f_Ur9LDoGPE
- Episode 3: National Adaptation Programme of Action to Climate Change (NAPA) in Tuvalu https://youtu.be/UGtlSLXXIOs
- Episode 4: Building Resilient Communities in Tonga (USAID) & GCCA: PSIS Kiribati Environmental Health Surveillance https://youtu.be/AbzMAXhV8H0.

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
Workers are busy putting up colorful banners on sidewalks posts in preparation for Liberation Day festivities. Celebrations will hopefully push through this weekend after being postponed twice due to typhoons.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

July 16, 2004

Concerns raised on youth facility's use for immigration detainees

Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Juan L. Babauta said his department would meet with the Attorney General's Office about plans to jail immigration detainees at the juvenile detention in Kagman, to assess its possible impact on youth offenders at the facility. With the manhunt of some 159 illegally staying members of the garment class action suit alone, overcrowding at the Immigration detention facility in As Perdido becomes imminent. Brown assured that there would be sight and sound barriers separating the juvenile and immigration detainee populations once the plan is implemented.

Consul hails 90-day stay limit

Japan Consul Takeo Saito has expressed appreciation for the CNMI government's move to extend the allowable stay for senior citizens from 30 days to 90 days. In an interview, Saito said he got confirmation from the Attorney General's Office that regulations implementing Public Law 14-6 were finalized as of June 29. The law, which Gov. Juan N. Babauta signed on May 20, allows the AGO to grant initial 90-day entry permits for tourists 55 years old and above, as well as some members of their immediate family. The current practice at the Division of Immigration grants all tourists an initial 30-day stay period, with a possible 60-day extension.

July 16, 2005

Woman sued over bad check

A company sued a woman for allegedly issuing a bad check in the amount of $12,000. In a civil action at the Superior Court, L & W Amusement Inc. said it took the check from Rita S. Benavente for value on Dec. 1, 2003. The company's lawyer, Michael White, said the check bounced when his client deposited it in the company's bank account. White said Benavente did not actually have an account with the Bank of Hawaii, where the check was to be drawn. The company then sent Benavente a demand for payment of the check pursuant to the Bad Checks Act. White said Benavente still owes the company some $4,042.32 in principal amount. He asked the court to compel the Benavente to pay the owed amount plus interest.

Feds' help sought for housing

Citing that nearly 80 percent of CNMI residents need housing assistance, the Legislature passed a joint resolution authorizing the central government to apply for federal housing grants, which would give the CNMI $5 million over five years. The resolution said that Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 2004, Public Law 93-388, extends the CBDG grant assistance to the CNMI, while the HOME Partnership or Title II of the Cranston-Gonzales National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, which aims to benefit the low and moderate income households, also covers the Commonwealth.

July 16, 2008

Argument leads to domestic violence

An argument over womanizing reportedly led to a domestic violence at a residence in Gualo Rai Monday afternoon. Leonard Duenas Camacho, 41, was arrested for assault and battery, and criminal mischief. The victim suffered bruises on the right wrist, police said. The Superior Court initially imposed a $1,500 cash bail for Camacho's temporary liberty. He was set to appear for a bail hearing yesterday afternoon. Responding police officers saw in the garage a damaged vehicle's windshield. A pair of pliers was stuck in the windshield. Items and broken glasses were scattered on the floor. The victim, who was crying, was carrying a baby. leads to domestic fight

Two brothers sentenced for January riot

The Superior Court yesterday sentenced to prison two brothers who were involved in a clash with another group of men in Chalan Kanoa that resulted in one being stabbed. Associate Judge David A. Wiseman sentenced Michael Torres Castro to a total of two years in prison for assault and battery, and criminal mischief, all suspended except for eight days. Wiseman sentenced Patrick Torres Castro to six months in prison, all suspended except for the three days already served, for riot. The judge placed Patrick Castro on six months probation, required him to perform 50 hours of community service, and pay a $125 fine and court assessment fee. Michael Castro was charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and criminal mischief. Patrick Castro was charged with riot and assault. Both entered a plea agreement with the government.

FIL-AM NIGHT AT HYATT: Honoring Filipino cuisine

Hyatt Regency Saipan will be honoring Filipino cuisine for the first time with their Fil-Am Night to be held tomorrow at Kili Café & Terrace.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Nothing is more evocative than the smell of food. This is especially true for homemade dishes that one grew up with. And it's always different for everyone, depending on where you grew up. It could be a savory stew, a bowl of creamy French onion soup, ramen noodles, or even plain plantains soaking in a syrupy concoction of caramelized sugar.

For many Filipinos, particularly those who are living in a country so far from home, it is the tangy smell of *sinigang*, the aroma of a crisp *lechon*, or the piquancy of adobo that brings back memories of Mom's home cooking, of food shared around the dining table with family and friends.

This Friday, Hyatt Regency Saipan will present its most authentic version of Filipino cuisine for the very first time, showcasing what has been dubbed as one of the fastest-growing culinary trends of the year.

"Because we have a large Filipino-American community, not only at the Hyatt Regency Saipan but on the island chain as well, we found it only fitting to do so," said marketing communications manager Valentina Haberman.

Dubbed Filipino-American night, it will be a culinary celebration of the Filipino and American cultures on the island at the Kili Café & Terrace.

"We definitely did not want to miss out on the opportunity to have our chefs feature dishes from the different provinces of the Philippines. That was one of our main inspirations to do so," said Haberman.

FOR RESERVATIONS
■ Tel: 234-1234

For lead chef Jeff Fernandez, a Filipino who hails from Pampanga, he is proud to be part of the team bringing in his home country's cuisine.

"I am proud because this is the first time. Now they are really acknowledging our cuisine and for the first time that they will be promoting Filipino food," Fernandez said.

Hyatt will also be serving *merienda* dishes such as *pancit palabok*, all cooked in the authentic and traditional way.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Pinoy favorites such as kare-kare and acharang papaya are some of the dishes included in the dinner buffet.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"Local foods here mostly come from or are versions of our cuisine so why not showcase our authentic food?" he added.

To start off your night, Kili Café will serve a welcome drink of refreshing *sago gulaman*—a not-so-sweet drink made flavorful by *pandan* and a bit of vanilla, served of course with tapioca pearls.

Fil-Am night will not be featuring the usual Pinoy food like adobo but various dishes some provinces are known for. This include the famous *bagnet* from Ilocos in the north, which is pork belly cooked to crispy perfection.

There is also housemade tocino of Pampanga from central Luzon, as well as Bulacan barbecued skewers.

From the central Visayan province of Cebu, Hyatt will be serving the famous Cebu lechon, arguably the best version of roasted suckling pig, as well as fresh Cebu lumpia.

Other Pinoy favorites from all over the country will also be served. For appetizers, this include *acharang* papaya or pickled green papaya, crab meat stewed in young coconut, *insalada pipino* or Pinoy-style pickled cucumbers, salted egg and tomato salad, as well as assorted seafood.

Expect the refreshing sourness of *sinigang na hipon* or prawn. For main dishes, pair steamed fragrant rice with *rellenong bangus* or stuffed milkfish, oxtail *kare-kare* paired with *bagoong*, and *sipoeg*, which is a vegetable medley with baby shrimps and quail eggs.

For dessert, enjoy your own creation of *halo-halo* where all the assorted ingredients will be available. There is also Brazo de Mercedes roulade, almond *leche* flan with tropical fruits, crispy banana *turon*, *puto*, coconut macaroons, and sago pudding.

"We didn't want the typical food. We wanted to show all the classical Pinoy food, that's why we have this menu," Fernandez said.

"We cooked everything traditionally. No fusion," he added.

Besides Fernandez, Renalto Tabuwena is also the main chef for this event.

"We really look forward to hosting it and you can tell that they put a lot of time and effort and love into these different delicacies," Haberman said

Fil-Am night will be held from 6am to 9pm. For reservations, call Hyatt at 234-1234.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XXV, Issue No. 140

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
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EDITORIAL

Now comes the hard part for Greece and the EU

The Greek debt crisis dates back years. But recent weeks have witnessed an acceleration of anxiety in Athens and other European capitals as heads of state, diplomats, finance ministers and others scurried to avoid a "Grexit"—a Greek exit from the 19-nation eurozone. Finally, after a marathon negotiating session in Brussels over the weekend, a tentative deal was struck that would keep Greece in the monetary union.

Now comes the hard part.

Politically, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who successfully urged Greek voters to reject the terms of a previous bailout plan in a July 5 referendum, now must quickly convince Parliament to agree to a deal many economists characterize as even less favorable. And Athens won't be the only place with unhappy elected officials: Some Europeans reject the very notion of the third bailout of Greece.

Economically, newly imposed policies (assuming Athens acquiesces) would cut public pensions, raise taxes, reform banks, streamline government, loosen labor laws, and reduce regulations on some industries, among other requirements. While these may help Greece grow in the long run, more immediately they could further stress an economy that's shrunk by 25 percent, and could increase unemployment even beyond the already Depression-level 25.6 percent rate (50.1 percent for younger Greek workers).

Yet as painful as the political and economic concessions are, they are likely better for Greece, Europe and the world than a Grexit would be, which raises the possibility of a chaotic contagion that could have global impact. So the best course of action, however unpopular, is parliamentary approval in Greece and follow-through by the creditor "troika" (the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission) that will shore up Greek banks and administer the broader rescue plan.

Beyond the immediate crisis, the best course of action is unclear. It appears increasingly probable that the euro actually may be an impediment to the laudable, even noble, goal of unifying Europe after the continent's conflicts tore it (and much of the world) apart in the last century.

The euro discord, worryingly, falls mostly along north-south lines, with Germany once again perceived by some Europeans as an unwelcome, unyielding hegemon. This not only can increase friction between governments, but it can contribute to the rise of anti-EU parties on the left and right that increasingly are moving beyond the political fringe and into the mainstream. That's a disturbing threat to the EU's long-stated goal of an "ever closer union," and to the more immediate unity needed to respond to Russian aggression, the Mediterranean migration crisis and other Pan-European challenges.

So EU leaders should continue to confer beyond the urgency of Athens' challenges and consider options to make the eurozone more flexible for countries with enfeebled economies.

If consensus emerges that the eurozone can be reformed effectively, appropriate steps should follow. If not, however, it would be far better to examine the alternatives under relatively stable conditions than during the kind of crisis negotiations that spiraled Greece, and Europe, toward the brink.

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NEWS ITEM:
HILLARY CLINTON ROPES OFF REPORTERS AT N.H. PARADE"
IS THAT HILLARY'S RESPONSE TO OUR IMPASSIONED REQUESTS FOR AN INTIMATE INTERVIEW?
SORTA. IT'S A RESTRAINING ORDER.
PRESS
MEDIA
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TELEGRAM & GAZETTE

America anxiously awaits the pope

By BETH KEPHART
THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

In Krakow, Poland, at the end of May, I found the Polish pope. In gardens and courtyards and beneath the flutter of bird wing. In Schindler's Factory and the Jewish Quarter, in the placard photographs of Planty Park, in public maps, and on the welcome signs of Krakow's international airport.

I found him in the peaceable quiet of the Paulist monastery, keeping watch over the tombs of writers and painters. I found him in the Bishop's Palace and in Strzelecki Park. I found him in the shadow of the Bell Tower on Wawel Hill—that remarkable rise of Jurassic rock where kings, fire, foreigners, and the Nazis all came and finally went—and in the standing-room-only hymns of Saturday and Sunday worshippers, in that brisk sense of purpose of monastery nuns, in the young priests carrying their necessary things in fashionable backpacks.

But perhaps it was within the Wawel Cathedral Museum that I most acutely felt the presence of St. John Paul II. There, in the Papal Room of that restored 14th-century building, where, one day, escaping the crowds, we climbed some steps and entered into a space of amber shadows. Beneath soft lights the folds of the pope's white and red cassocks shone. Beneath another lamp stood the careful peaks of his biretta. The pope's beaded shoes, the pope's goblet, the pope's zucchetto, the pope's sash, and the chair where the pope once sat—in the Papal Room, it all emerged as real and profoundly material. In its close proximity, I felt something true. The simple, elegant humanity of one who thought he might be a philosopher or poet and became instead a saint.

I am not a Catholic, though I married one. I am not naive about what can happen when faith is institutionalized or when power hides behind privilege. I discount neither fissures nor scars. But to go to Krakow and walk the legacy of John Paul is to discover the son of a Polish army captain who was committed to peace, a kayaker, hiker, skier, and soccer player who spent untold hours in restful prayer, a contemplative writer who was also, during Nazi occupation, a defiant actor, a gentle soul who worked the quarries under German rule, a man of proud Polish heritage who, when called to serve beyond his own borders, did.

John Paul condemned anti-Semitism. He fought communism. He opposed both wars in the Persian Gulf and Iraq. He cared immensely about children. He apologized, on behalf of the Catholic Church, to Jews, Galileo, the victims of the African slave trade, and those who suffered at the hands of the Inquisition. He befriended the young Turk who had tried to kill him. He traveled farther than any pope before him had, and even in the midst of all he had to do, all we'll never know he did, he found time to honor the coming First Communion of my friend Karolina. When she was 8 years old, she lived on the outskirts of Krakow. Her uncle was a priest writing his doctoral thesis at the Vatican. When the pope learned from Karolina's uncle about this little girl who shared the name he had been born to—Karol Jozef Wojtyla—he sent her a pearl rosary completed by a golden cross in a brown bag sealed by the Vatican's logo—pearls so beautiful, Karolina says, that they change colors with the sun.

John Paul came to Philadelphia in 1979, as part of his 9,000-mile goodwill trip. He incensed an altar, said Mass, looked out upon the more than a million people who had come to share the moment, and glowed.

At the end of this September, as part of the World Meeting of Families, Philadelphia will host its second pope—another man of humble beginnings, another non-Italian pope, another soccer player (he is said to like the tango, too), another Catholic leader with that ineffable thing we call charisma.

Pope Francis will say his Mass on the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art to a crowd no one is pretending can be estimated. He will bring a message of peace to a modern era few of us can understand—to eruptions emerging from tensions we had hoped had passed, to violence directed at known goodness, to the arrogance of warfare and unrighteous ammunition. He will remind us to be mindful of unnecessary filth, of winnowing resources, of empty consumerism, and whether or not you agree with the economics or politics of his encyclical, "Laudato Si," it seems impossible not to agree with these words, Pope Francis' words: "It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity."

Dignity. Because that is what it is all coming down to, isn't it? Our ability to rescue both the Earth and one another from blind impulse, selfish want, successive unkindness. Our ability to convert personal ambition into worldly good. From the people of Krakow may we learn that legacies certainly are built and polished. But they must also be carried forward.

Graciousness in the midst of a pope's grace—but also graciousness and mutual respect and ecological sensitivity in the weeks and years after he leaves us. That is my prayer.

Beth Kephart is the award-winning author of 20 books, including the forthcoming Love: A Philadelphia Affair *(Temple University Press/September), a collection of her essays for* The Philadelphia Inquirer, *for whom she wrote this essay.*

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'What other flag is there?'

By JIM RAYPHAND
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is the executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc., more popularly known as NMPASI.

I have never been a slave owner and I would not care to be one; in fact, I am disgusted at the thought.

Still, my heritage is inalienably linked to a Southern confederacy of people who saw nothing wrong with enslaving people on the grounds of something as arbitrary as the color of their skin—I imagine more than a few bodies rolled over in their graves when I came out brown.

My maternal grandfather—a World War II-era navigator for the U.S. Air Force—was a Virginia man who greeted everyone he met with friendly words. Ignorant rednecks notwithstanding, a proper Southerner (at least the ones I've known personally) could teach us all something about treating people with dignity and respect. True Southern hospitality is second to none.

Upon a weekend visit with my Grandfather during my college years, I told him about a controversy at my school over whether or not students should be allowed to hang confederate flags outside their dorm room windows (this is not a new debate). To which he quipped, "What other flag is there?"—jokingly, of course.

The point being that for him and many more southerners like him, the Confederacy (and subsequently the Confederate flag) stood for far more than some racist struggle to preserve slavery and certainly more than some modern-day rednecks' battle-cry for white supremacy. He never owned any slaves either, but he was a proud southerner through and through. Among other things, he kept a statue of Gen. Robert E. Lee prominently displayed in his house with a loaded gun rack of various rifles and an old musket that looked as if it might have been used in America's Civil War.

■■■

The primary issue and of grave concern to the Confederate States of America were their states' rights to govern themselves—and no, that certainly does not excuse the matter of slavery. But the fear of tyrannical rules was a lesson not easily forgotten from a mere 100 years prior. And so the most legitimate source of Southern pride in the Confederacy rests in honoring the dead who stood steadfast against an imminent threat (perceived or otherwise) to their independence, hence (for example) Virginia's enduring motto of "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Thus Always to Tyrants). And no, the irony (or better yet, the hypocrisy) of enslaving one group of people in the name of freedom for another does not escape me.

No doubt the Civil War ended as it should—the United States of America persevered, each state continues to enjoy some level of sovereign immunity, and slavery was abolished.

(Coincidentally, the issue of our CNMI's "sovereign immunity" is currently before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit to be adjudication in a case brought by NMPASI on behalf of an individual with mental illness.)

Discrimination is ugly in all its forms. The reality is that battle fronts are formed, lost, and won daily on the basis of race, religion, color, sex and disability—the latter being NMPASI's area of expertise.

■■■

My Grandfather, despite being a white male product of a segregated South, took great pride in his colored grandchildren. Yet, he was about 70 years old (in the early 1990's) the first time he ever invited a black man into his house for a sit down dinner.

"I had Mr. Witcher and his family over for dinner the other night," he told me. "And I'll tell you, they were downright pleasant."

To that point, Mr. Witcher (a black man also from Virginia) had been the one who took care of my Grandfather's lawn. One of my fondest memories from my brief time of living with my Grandfather was helping Mr. Witcher rake and bag leaves in the crisp Virginia fall weather. And truth be told, Mr. Witcher was the first black American I had ever spoken with directly—I would have been about 11 years old at the time. Subsequently, the first black person I can honestly say that I made friends with thereafter wouldn't be until high school. Even he might be surprised to know that and even more surprised to think that I might actually be a confederate sympathizer though I suspect he is clear about where I stand on the issue of racism.

■■■

The stars-and-bars of our Southern ancestors is the cross that I and all other great, great, great, great grandsons and daughters of the confederate South have to bear. But I will not apologize for it any more than I'd apologize for the crucifix in light of the countless atrocities committed at the hands of past Catholic zealots or, for that matter, the U.S. flag for any misdeeds committed in the shadows of our red, white and blue. I am what I am.

We are an imperfect, flawed breed of people grown out of a regrettable history that we cannot erase and "woe to those who try lest they be doomed to repeat it."

For more on discrimination against people with disabilities, please feel to contact the NMPASI office at (670) 235-7273/4 [tel] / 235-7275 [fax/tty] or via the Internet at www.nmpasi.org.

Obamacare foes should ditch consistency for compromise

By BARBARA SHELLY
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

A couple of weeks ago, right after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that one faulty sentence in the Affordable Care Act shouldn't be used to throw the federal law into chaos, I noticed a statement sent via Twitter by U.S. Rep. Ann Wagner, the Republican congresswoman from eastern Missouri.

"Today's SCOTUS decision doesn't change the fact that Obamacare is deeply flawed and puts an undue burden on Americans," she said.

I was feeling pretty happy about the ruling, and so I indulged myself by posting a mildly sarcastic (by Twitter standards) rejoinder to Wagner's tweet. Something about "a broken record moment."

That earned me a cyberspace rebuke from one of Wagner's supporters, who said: "Consistency of stance is a good thing, right? The media would go bananas if Ann changed her opinion, and yet you mock her."

You know, it really is a brutal world out there, in the frothing sinkholes of social media, talk radio and cable news. And I suppose there would be hell to pay for any member of Congress who announced, "In light of the latest Supreme Court ruling, I will be meeting with members of the party across the aisle to seek common ground on Obamacare going forward."

But that is exactly what needs to happen, with health care and any number of other issues. Consistency of stance is not a good thing if the result is paralysis.

How did we get to the stage where politicians are expected to check their independence at the doorway to Capitol Hill? State legislatures are just as bad.

The people elected to be public servants are subjected to loyalty oaths, purity tests, pledges and a dizzying array of rankings by interest groups. Pragmatism is the first casualty of office.

Jack Danforth, the former Republican U.S. senator from Missouri, talked about the phenomenon during a recent appearance in Kansas City.

"I loved it when I did it," he said of his work in Congress, "but I'd hate it now."

Danforth continued: "Once you're elected they don't do anything. The true believers, the activists and the (Rush) Limbaugh types won't let them do anything. Politics is gridlock. Who would want to be in it?"

Oh, lots of people, by the looks of the Republican presidential primary. What the heck, there's even getting to be a backlog for Missouri's lieutenant governor's race.

But Danforth's point is well taken.

"You can't make politics work if it's a morality play all the time," he said. "Politics is about working things out. But the party regulars, the activists, don't want you to work it out."

After the Supreme Court's health care ruling, President Barack Obama said he'd like to move away from the let's-get-rid-of-Obamacare debate and on to issues such as improving health care quality, controlling costs, eliminating waste and expanding access.

Those kinds of discussions are going on all the time on the fringes of the political arena. People have some really good ideas. But most, if not all, of the candidates running for president on the Republican ticket are still vowing to repeal and replace Obamacare—with something. And you can bet the same will be true when U.S. Senate and House races heat up.

These folks who are still hunkered down in the repeal-and-replace crouch are missing out on the chance to make a difference. What's worse, they're creating a bottleneck for other people's innovations.

We shouldn't confuse consistency with craziness. To be consistently in favor of free market tenets in health care is admirable and could play a role in a constructive debate. To make opposition to Obamacare your entire health care strategy, even though you have no solid idea for a replacement, is unproductive and, well, crazy.

Ask most people, and I'll bet they'll say they'd trade consistency for progress. But no candidate for national or state office dares to hint that they're moving in that direction.

Barbara Shelly is a columnist for the Kansas City Star. *Readers may write to her at:* Kansas City Star, *1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, Mo. 64108-1413, or by email at bshelly@kcstar.com.*

Does Hillary Clinton know what's best for you?

By RAMESH PONNURU
BLOOMBERG VIEW

Hillary Clinton wants you to know that she loves small businesses, and that she knows what's best for them. She's convinced that she could do a better job of running companies than their owners can.

"I will produce ways to encourage companies to share profits with their employees," she said in a speech she gave on the economy Monday. "That is good for workers and good for businesses. Studies show that profit sharing that gives everyone a stake in the company's success can boost productivity and put money directly into employees' pockets. It's a win-win."

No doubt profit-sharing can have this effect. But Clinton would have us believe that businesses are leaving money on the table, unable to see a profit opportunity or unwilling to take it, and are thus in need of a shove by the federal government, which knows their interests better than they do. Believe that if you will.

Clinton also says that businesses in the U.S. are too concerned with the short term, and that she'll encourage them to change. Is it plausible, though, that politicians looking to the next election will be a force for farsightedness? Perhaps Clinton should explain how she would get Social Security in balance before lecturing others about the long run. In her speech, she says she's interested in "defending and enhancing" the program, which sounds like more fun than paying for it.

Nor is it just businesses that Clinton wants to second-guess. She believes that more women should be in the paid labor force, and she wants to get them there by offering more subsidized child-care options. Never mind that most mothers of small children don't want to work full-time or use day-care centers. And never mind that more of them have full-time positions than actually want them.

Clinton is also convinced that her immigration agenda would work wonders on the economy. "Bringing millions of hard-working people into the formal economy would increase our gross domestic product by an estimated $700 billion over 10 years," she says. Casual listeners would conclude that most Americans will be better off as a result—after all, Clinton earlier remarked that her concern is with "people's lives and livelihoods," not the GDP in itself.

But this comment, too, was misleading. The source for that $700 billion figure is a Congressional Budget Office report. The report wasn't looking merely at the effects of giving legal status to illegal immigrants, as you might think from Clinton's description; it was looking at the effects of a bill that included a sizable increase in legal immigration. Bringing in more people increases GDP, of course. But the report found that after a decade, per capita GDP would be 0.7 percent lower with the bill than without it. It offered no estimate about whether native-born Americans and immigrants already in the U.S. would see an increase or decrease in their income and wealth.

It would be unfair to say that all of this hype is in the service of personal ambition. Clinton's ambitions are ideological as well. She could run against President George W. Bush's record alone; instead she wants to take on Ronald Reagan too. Our economy, she says, has taken a wrong turn over "the past several decades," and it all started 35 years ago.

That's not an especially persuasive narrative: Most Americans saw their incomes grow pretty smartly for the two decades following Reagan's election. Like President Barack Obama before her, though, Clinton would like to undo the Reagan revolution. Lucky for those of us who don't share the left's historical vendettas a new President Clinton would have a Republican House and probably Senate to keep these ambitions in check. Lucky for the nation's small-business owners too.

Ramesh Ponnuru is a Bloomberg View columnist. Readers may send him email at rponnuru@bloomberg.net.

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Northeast winds 5 to 10 mph.
▲87° ▼77°

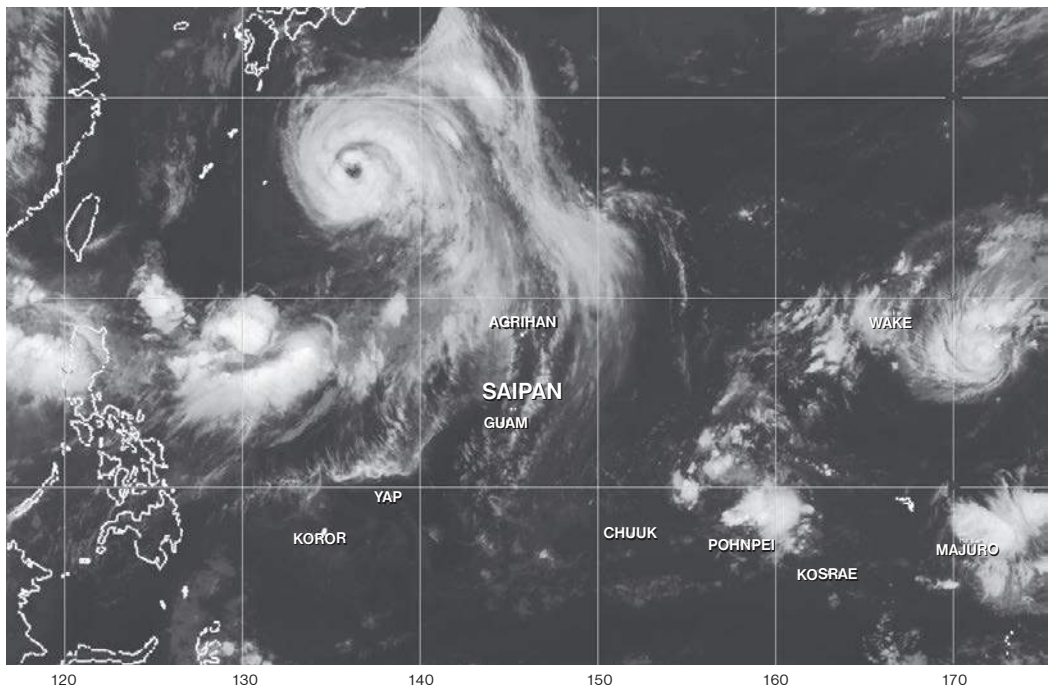
FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms. Northeast winds 5 to 10 mph.
▲87° ▼77°

SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.
▲87° ▼77°

SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.
▲87° ▼77°

MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼77°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2015
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Typhoon Halola (01C) is centered 330 miles east-southeast of Wake Island near 17N171E moving west-northwest at 7 mph with maximum sustained winds of 100 mph. Widespread showers and isolated thunderstorms are found near the center between 15N and 20N from 169E to 173E. For more information on Typhoon Halola, see bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN32 PGTW and advisories issued by the National Weather Service under WMO header WTPQ32 PGUM. Low-level convergence in monsoon southwest winds flowing into Typhoon Nangka south of Japan is producing numerous showers and scattered thunderstorms well northwest of Koror and Yap west of a line from 19N130E to 17N136E to 14N130E. A weak circulation is centered northwest of Pohnpei near 10N157E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring north of Pohnpei between 8N and 11N from 157E to 1624. A tropical disturbance in the Marshall islands is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in the area bounded by 10N175E to 8N170E to 5N170E to EQ180 to 6N179E back to 10N175E. This includes Majuro but is just east of Kwajalein.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Palau	Cloudy	▲87	▼80
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼79
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲84	▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼78
Majuro	Cloudy	▲84	▼80

Around the Globe

Auckland	Rain	▲59	▼45
Beijing	Sunny	▲93	▼68
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲92	▼76
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	▲88	▼75
London	Rain	▲73	▼57
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲79	▼61
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼78
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲59	▼42
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲90	▼78
New York	Thundershowers	▲86	▼76
Osaka	Showers	▲78	▼71
Paris	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼58
Pusan	Rain	▲71	▼67
Rome	Sunny	▲92	▼75
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲95	▼58
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	▲65	▼56
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	▲90	▼66
Tokyo	Showers	▲76	▼69
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲93	▼76

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:53 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.1 Feet
7:48 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
3:12 PM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.3 Feet
10:05 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Sunday	5:57 AM	6:51 PM
Monday	5:57 AM	6:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:50 AM	6:52 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	7:38 PM
Saturday	7:33 AM	8:21 PM
Sunday	8:22 AM	9:02 PM
Monday	9:10 AM	9:41 PM

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Friday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 2, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:30pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ6063	2:25am	6:00am	3, 4, 6
OZ626	3:20am	7:00am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
7C3403	5:25am	9:10am	4, 5
7C3401	3:15pm	7:35pm	3, 5, 6
7C3401	4:20pm	8:05pm	1, 2, 4, 7

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ6063/701	2:25am	11:05am	3, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/701	3:20am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	Daily via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:50pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/275	6:05am	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:10pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	8:50pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:10pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	8:50pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:10pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:10pm	4 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ6063	2:25am	6:00am	3, 4, 6
OZ626	3:20am	7:00am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ6063/721	2:25am	11:50am	3, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	3:20am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	9:55pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	9:55pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	9:55pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	9:55pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:00pm	2:35pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:00pm	1:35pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	2:55pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	2:55pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	8:45am	2:15pm	3, 5, 6
7C3402	9:30am	3:20pm	1, 2, 4, 7
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ6053	7:55pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6
OZ625	8:20pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

DL276/288	9:30am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/6053	12:15pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA5071	10:05pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
PR110/UA5071	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:25pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:25pm	2:40pm+1	1, 3 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:25pm	2:40pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:25pm	6:25pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:25pm	8:05pm+1	1, 3, 6 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:25pm	10:10pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	7:30am+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	8:05am+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	1:50pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	11:30pm	8:05pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/6053	1:10pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	9:55pm	1:50pm+1	5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5077	9:55pm	2:35pm+1	1, 3 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5077	9:55pm	8:05pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Dissent in Greece over austerity deal grows ahead of vote

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras faced a revolt in his left-wing party and workers' calls for strikes ahead of Wednesday's Parliament vote on a bailout deal meant to prevent the country's economy from collapsing.

AP

Demonstrators gather near the Greek Parliament during a rally against the government's agreement with its creditors in Athens, in central Athens, Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

Now Tsipras must keep his own government from collapsing as he tries to push a deal that he calls "irrational" through Parliament. Talks on a bailout worth 85 billion euros ($94 billion) will start if Parliament agrees by Wednesday to creditors' demands, including painful tax hikes and pension cuts.

Hard-liners in Tsipras' own Cabinet and his radical leftist Syriza party are in open revolt. Unions are calling for or extending strikes to coincide with the Parliament vote.

After a stunning win in a referendum that rejected calls for more austerity, Tsipras remained in a bind this week as he reached a deal with creditors: Greece's cash-starved banks would likely have collapsed, sending the country spiraling out of the euro, Europe's joint currency. So after a marathon eurozone summit, Tsipras agreed to tough new measures that mean economically-battered Greeks will pay more for most goods and services by the end of the week.

The bill is expected to pass with votes from opposition parties. But the Tsipras government's political survival could be in danger if large numbers of its own lawmakers resign their seats or openly vote against the bill. Many in Tsipras' party have indicated they will refuse to vote for the deal because it goes back on election pledges to repeal austerity measures that have been imposed on Greece for years.

Pro-European opposition parties have pledged support for the bailout legislation, but Tsipras could effectively lose his majority in Parliament, weakening his ability to push through measures that he had himself vehemently opposed until a few weeks ago.

Tsipras vowed that he would not step down, despite the open dissent. "I will not run away from my responsibilities," he said in an interview on state TV.

He criticized the deal, but said it was the best Greece could get.

"The policies imposed on us were irrational," Tsipras said. "We faced a tough and punitive position from our partners ... But the (agreement) does offer a way out of the crisis."

There was speculation Tsipras might choose to reshuffle his Cabinet, which would remove dissenters from key positions.

Energy Minister Panagiotis Lafazanis called on the prime minister to cancel the legislation before it reaches Parliament, saying it was forced on Athens by lead eurozone lender Germany and its allies, who had acted like "financial assassins."

"The deal is unacceptable," Lafazanis said in a statement. "It may pass through Parliament ... but the people will never accept it and will be united in their fight against it."

Tsipras' coalition partner, Defense Minister Panos Kammenos, also denounced the new deal.

"There was a coup. A coup in the heart of Europe," said Kammenos, who heads the right-wing Independent Greeks party.

White House lowers estimate of budget deficit to $455B

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House predicted on Tuesday that this year's budget deficit will register at $455 billion, less than forecast in February and the lowest yet of Barack Obama's presidency.

The new figure is slightly less than 2014's deficit of $483 billion. In February, the administration predicted a deficit of $583 billion.

During Obama's first term, deficits topped $1 trillion each year. That reflected a severe financial crisis and the worst recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But as the economy has recovered, revenues have gone up. The rates of inflation for expensive health care programs like Medicare have fallen and annual agency budgets have remained tight, contributing to the improved deficit.

On the economy, the White House predicts 2 percent growth for the current year, rising to 2.9 percent next year. It says the official unemployment rate should drop to 5.1 percent, down slightly from the current national average of 5.3 percent, already a seven-year low. The White House had predicted 3 percent growth in gross domestic product earlier this year in an estimate that was finalized before a bad winter slowed the economy.

While the new numbers reflect improvement, budget hawks continue to warn that the nation's long-term fiscal trajectory is unsustainable and will require lawmakers to eventually tackle the rising costs of expensive benefit programs such as Medicare.

But after several failures by Obama and Republicans to agree on the budget, there's no sense in Washington that changes will be made as long as Obama—who insists on tax increases on the wealthy and special interests such as oil companies—occupies the Oval Office. The latest figures contribute to a lack of urgency.

Budget negotiations between Obama and House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, in 2011 and late 2012 broke up in acrimony, largely over an impasse on tax hikes.

Lower oil prices may trickle out of Iran deal

By TOM MURPHY
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Oil prices that slumped steeply earlier this year may take another hit once a historic deal between the West and Iran allows that country to start pouring more crude into a market already brimming with supply.

Many analysts estimate that Iran, OPEC's fourth-largest oil producer, has piled up tens of millions of barrels on floating barges that can be exported in fairly short order after sanctions have been lifted. The country will follow that with increased production from its oil fields.

When all this happens and how it ultimately affects the price of oil remains far from certain. Energy prices can depend on production levels in other countries, currency rates and demand sparked by the health of global economies. Plus there are questions about the state of Iran's oil infrastructure and its ability to increase production.

Despite all the uncertainty, analyst Tom Kloza expects the lifting of sanctions to help make energy prices next year "more palatable for most of the world." Kloza, global head of energy analysis for the Oil Price Information Service, noted that additional production from Iran would be mixed in with high volumes currently being churned out by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the U.S. and other oil-producing countries.

"All cylinders right now are just firing for high oil supply, and this just might be the turbo that throws more oil onto the market for 2016," he said.

Those bulging supplies sent the price of oil plunging from $107 a barrel in June 2014 to a low of about $43 this March. The price rebounded to near $60 before sliding back last week as an Iranian deal seemed imminent. After initially dropping Tuesday on the announcement of the agreement, oil rallied to close up 84 cents at $53.04.

Iran produced about 2.8 million barrels a day last month, but its oil exports have fallen to about 1.1 million barrels since sanctions were enforced in 2012. The country's oil fields are estimated to be capable of raising daily production to 3.4 million to 3.6 million barrels within months of sanctions being lifted, according to the International Energy Agency's July oil market report.

AP

In this Dec. 22, 2014 file photo, an Iranian oil worker rides his bicycle at the Tehran's oil refinery south of the capital Tehran, Iran.

US retail sales fall in June as consumers stay cautious

WASHINGTON (AP)—Americans cut back their spending at stores and restaurants last month, a sign that they remain cautious despite robust job growth in the past year.

Retail sales fell 0.3 percent in June, the Commerce Department said Tuesday, the weakest showing since February's harsh winter weather kept shoppers indoors. That followed a robust 1 percent jump in May, though that was revised down from a previous estimate of 1.2 percent.

Economists had expected that consumers would rein in their spending after May's large gain. But the reversal was much sharper than projected.

"It certainly is a case of `two steps forward, one step back' for the U.S. economy," Dan Greenhaus, an economist at BTIG, said in a note to clients.

The figures suggest that Americans are still reluctant to spend freely, possibly restrained by memories of the Great Recession.

"Household caution still appears to be holding back a more rapid pace of spending growth," Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase, said in a note to clients.

Still, consumers spent more in the April-June quarter than in the first three months of the year, the data shows. That, in turn, should boost growth in the second quarter to about a 2.5 percent to 3 percent annual rate, up from the first quarter, when the economy shrank 0.2 percent.

AP

In this June 4, 2015 photo, a customer, center, checks out at a Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market store in Bentonville, Ark.

And there are signs that consumers are more confident, suggesting that sales could rebound in the coming months.

"One soft month is not a trend," Ian Shepherson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said. "We expect spending to strengthen in the second half."

The Conference Board's consumer confidence index jumped in June to its second-highest level since the recession ended in June 2009. It is now 17.4 percent higher than a year ago.

And Americans are borrowing more: Consumer credit, which includes auto, student and credit card loans and excludes mortgages, rose a healthy 6.5 percent in May from a year earlier.

Even so, June's weak spending was broad-based. Excluding autos, gas, building materials and restaurants, so-called core retail sales—which factor into the government's official measure of economic growth—fell 0.1 percent in June, after an increase of 0.7 percent in May.

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Graffiti 2pc Comforter Set Twin Size $19.95

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Dart Pin 3 pc 95¢

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Nation

Pluto up close: Spacecraft achieves flyby, then calls home

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP)—NASA's New Horizons spacecraft got humanity's first up-close look at Pluto on Tuesday, sending word of its triumph across 3 billion miles to scientists waiting breathlessly back home.

Confirmation of mission success came 13 hours after the actual flyby and, after a day of both jubilation and tension, allowed the New Horizons team to finally celebrate in full force.

"This is a tremendous moment in human history," John Grunsfeld, NASA's science mission chief, said at a news conference.

Principal scientist Alan Stern asked the entire New Horizons team in the audience to stand: "We did it! Take a bow!"

The unprecedented encounter was the last stop on NASA's grand tour of our solar-system's planets over the past half-century. The journey began 9 1/2 years ago, back when Pluto was still considered a full-fledged planet.

Tuesday morning, a cheering, flag-waving celebration swept over the mission operations center in Maryland at the time of closest approach. But until New Horizons phoned home Tuesday night, there was no guarantee the spacecraft had buzzed the small, icy, faraway—but no longer unknown—world.

AP
This July 13, 2015 image provided by NASA shows Pluto, seen from the New Horizons spacecraft.

NASA said the spacecraft—the size of a baby grand piano—swept to within 7,700 miles of Pluto at 31,000 mph. It was programmed to then go past the dwarf planet and begin studying its far side.

To commemorate the moment of closest approach, scientists released the best picture yet of Pluto, taken on the eve of the flyby.

Even better images will start "raining" down on Earth beginning Wednesday, promised principal scientist Alan Stern. But he had cautioned everyone to "stay tuned" until New Horizons contacted home.

It takes 4 1/2 hours for signals to travel one-way between New Horizons and Earth. The message went out late in the afternoon during a brief break in the spacecraft's data-gathering frenzy. The New Horizons team kept up a confirmation countdown, noting via Twitter when the signal should have passed the halfway point, then Jupiter's orbit.

The uncertainty added to the drama. "This is true exploration," cautioned Stern, a Southwest Research Institute planetary scientist.

Among the possible dangers: cosmic debris that could destroy the mission. But with the chances of a problem considered extremely low, scientists and hundreds of others assembled at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory erupted in jubilation when the moment of closest approach occurred at 7:49 a.m. EDT. The lab is the spacecraft's developer and manager.

The scene repeated itself a little before 9 p.m. EDT.

This time, the flight control room was packed compared with earlier, when it was empty because New Horizons was out of touch and operating on autopilot.

Teen in good spirits after surviving mountain plane crash

SEATTLE (AP)—With her step-grandparents dead or dying in the burning wreckage of their small plane, 16-year-old Autumn Veatch needed to somehow find her way off the remote, thickly forested Washington state mountainside where they crashed Saturday afternoon.

Bruised by the impact, singed by the fire, fearing an explosion and knowing she couldn't help the other victims, the girl did what she could: She headed down the steep slope, following a creek to a river. She spent a night on a sand bar, where she felt safer. She drank small amounts of the flowing water, but worried she might get sick if she drank more.

She followed the river to a trail, and the trail to a highway. Two men driving by stopped and picked her up Monday afternoon, bringing her—about two full days after the crash—to the safety of a general store in Mazama, a tiny town in north-central Washington, near the east entrance of North Cascades National Park.

"We crashed, and I was the only one that made it out," she told a 911 operator, after a store employee called for her. "I have a lot of burns on my hands, and I'm kind of covered in bruises and scratches and stuff."

AP
This May 9, 2015 photo provided by Sierra Lundy shows Autumn Veatch in Bellingham, Wash.

As authorities continued searching for the plane's wreckage Tuesday, aided by clues Veatch provided, they also marveled at the wherewithal of a teenager who managed to survive—and to later joke from her hospital bed about how it was a good thing her dad made her watch the television show "Survivor."

2 dead, some missing in Kentucky floods; storms expected

AP
Doris Hardin talks on the phone as she takes a break from looking for her missing cats and other belongings from her trailer which was swept away after deadly flooding in Flat Gap, Ky., Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

FLAT GAP, Ky. (AP)—Doris Hardin watched the water rise from the window of her mobile home in rural Johnson County. Her lights flickered off then her neighbor banged on the door, shouting for her to flee.

She ran for her car but it was already gone.

"I grabbed my keys and my purse and went out to get my car and it was floating down the creek."

The floodwaters rising around Hardin late Monday killed one man and one woman, left six more missing and sent rescue crews to comb the hilly Appalachian terrain Tuesday, as the threat of more floods bore down on rescue efforts. The water swept up Hardin's trailer, her two cats still inside, and smashed it into a growing heap of mangled debris: other mobile homes, wrecked cars, snapped trees and downed power lines.

"One started and then they all just followed, and started piling into each other," she said, referring to the other mobile homes.

Emergency personnel in the hardest-hit neighborhoods in Johnson County struggled with the debris and difficult communication as they went door-to-door Tuesday, searching for those who might be trapped in their homes, Kentucky State Police Trooper Steven Mounts said. Some people were rescued from trees they climbed to escape the floodwaters, according to county Sheriff Dwayne Price. The missing range in age from 22 to 74.

ACROSS THE NATION

Lawyers in theater shooting trial make final appeals to jury

CENTENNIAL, Colo. (AP)—James Holmes was legally sane when he entered a packed movie theater armed with an assault rifle, a shotgun and a pistol, intent on killing as many people as he could, a prosecutor told jurors Tuesday in closing arguments at the gunman's trial. "That guy was sane beyond a reasonable doubt, and he needs to be held accountable for what he did," District Attorney George Brauchler said. But defense lawyer Daniel King countered that Holmes was controlled by his schizophrenia. "The mental illness caused this to happen. Only the mental illness caused this, and nothing else," King said.

Boston police captain's son jailed in bomb plot case

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (AP)—A Boston police captain's son who authorities say plotted to detonate a bomb at a university was ordered on Tuesday to remain behind bars while he awaits trial. Alexander Ciccolo was arrested July 4 after he received four guns from a person cooperating with the FBI, authorities said. His father is veteran police Capt. Robert Ciccolo, who alerted the FBI after his son said he wanted to join the Islamic State group. The police captain was not in U.S. District Court in Springfield for his son's detention hearing Tuesday. Ciccolo, 23, mouthed "I love you" to his mother, who was seated in the front row.

US judge narrows Michael Brown family suit against Ferguson

ST. LOUIS (AP)—A federal judge has narrowed a wrongful-death lawsuit filed by the family of Michael Brown Jr. against Ferguson, its former police chief and the white ex-police officer who fatally shot the unarmed, black 18-year-old. U.S. District Judge E. Richard Webber on Tuesday dismissed four of the seven counts from the suit and told lawyers for Michael Brown Sr. and Lesley McSpadden that they must make a more persuasive claim for damages on behalf of their late son. Brown's parents didn't attend the two-hour hearing in St. Louis.

Obama calls for shorter sentences for nonviolent convicts

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Calling it an issue America can't afford to ignore, President Barack Obama laid out an expansive vision Thursday for fixing the criminal justice system by focusing on communities, courtrooms and cellblocks. He announced a federal review of the use of solitary confinement and urged Congress to pass a sentencing reform bill by year's end. In a speech to the NAACP's annual convention, Obama also called for voting rights to be restored to felons who have served their sentences, and said employers should "ban the box" asking job candidates about their past convictions. He said long mandatory minimum sentences now in place should be reduced—or discarded entirely.

Asia

Chinese media slam human rights lawyers as rabble-rousers

BEIJING (AP)—China's state media on Tuesday accused more than two dozen human rights lawyers rounded up in recent days of being troublemakers intent on illegal activism, as foreign governments and rights groups expressed growing concern over the crackdown.

The human rights watchdog Amnesty International said 25 human rights lawyers and civil activists have been detained or have disappeared since last Thursday. Another 123 people—mostly lawyers and activists—have been warned not to speak out or act on behalf of those detained, it said. Many of those warned were detained briefly themselves.

The crackdown targets Chinese lawyers who have joined with civil activists in publicizing alleged unlawful practices by police and courts, drawing public attention to unjust cases, disputing official descriptions of controversial events and challenging authorities to follow the letter of the law.

Human Rights Watch researcher Maya Wang said the human rights lawyers had helped build a civil society in China over the past decade to hold authorities accountable, and that the crackdown was part of a "methodological dismantling" of that civil society since Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power.

The U.S. State Department condemned the detentions earlier this week and called for the release of the lawyers, who it said were "seeking to protect the rights of Chinese citizens."

The nationalist newspaper Global Times responded Tuesday by calling the U.S. criticism uncomfortable but inconsequential—like having "chewing gum stuck to your shoe"—and said it was up to Chinese courts to decide whether the lawyers acted illegally.

State media reports have depicted the lawyers as self-promoters intent on spreading half-truths and arranging illegal protests outside court venues. The official Xinhua News Agency said lawyers should uphold the law, not engage in "rabble-rousing" and "mob rule."

Many of the detained lawyers belong to Beijing law firm Fengrui, which has defended human rights activists and practitioners of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong. Its office was raided by police on Friday.

The Public Security Ministry accused the lawyers of disrupting public order, seeking illicit profits, illegally hiring protesters and trying to unfairly influence the courts, Xinhua said, saying more than 40 such incidents had occurred since July 2012.

The group of human rights lawyers and civil activists has been labeled a major crime gang, which the ministry claimed to have destroyed through a coordinated operation, Xinhua said.

Authorities have considered human rights lawyers a thorn in the side of the state for some time. Last year, state media began to question the reputations of many of the lawyers, saying they were more interested in seeking publicity than practicing their trade inside the courtroom.

A trigger for the crackdown may have been a police shooting in May in which members of the Chinese public questioned whether an officer acted properly in drawing a gun and fatally shooting an unarmed but irate man inside a train station in northeastern China.

AP

In this April 18, 2015 file photo, Chinese lawyer Wang Yu speaks during an interview in Beijing. China's state media on Tuesday, July 14, 2015 accused more than two dozen human rights attorneys rounded up in recent days, including Wang Yu, of being troublemakers intent on illegal activism as foreign governments and rights groups expressed growing concern over the arrests.

ASIAN BRIEFS

South Korea returns 2 North Koreans, lets 3 fishermen stay

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea on Tuesday sent back two North Korean fishermen who were rescued from South Korean waters but said it would not return three others who requested asylum. The two fishermen were returned through the border village of Panmunjom, where they were greeted by North Korean officials and relatives, said an official from Seoul's Unification Ministry, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules. The North has demanded the return of three other fishermen from the same boat, though Seoul says the three wanted to defect to the South. The ministry official said those three fishermen were receiving resettlement training.

Pakistan court grants bail to top model arrested with cash

ISLAMABAD (AP)—A Pakistan court granted bail Tuesday to a top model Ayaan Ali, who has been held since March after being caught trying to fly to Dubai with half a million dollars in cash stashed in her luggage, her lawyer said. In a televised comment, defense lawyer Latif Khosa said the Lahore High Court granted bail to Ali after hearing arguments from both sides. He said they had started the paperwork for the release of Ali, who has been the focus of Pakistani media's attention since authorities nabbed her at the VIP lounge of Islamabad's airport. Under Pakistani laws, no one can carry over $10,000 on a flight, but authorities found $506,800 tucked into her luggage. It was unclear when the model would be freed. Ali is being held at a prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi.

NYU student detained in North Korea hopes for quick release

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP)—A South Korean student from New York University who is being detained in North Korea for allegedly entering the country illegally said Tuesday that he hopes to be released soon. Won Moon Joo, who was presented to the media in North Korea's capital, Pyongyang, also said he was being treated well and asked his family not to worry too much about him. He acknowledged breaking North Korean laws, but such admissions are often recanted by detainees after they're set free. Detainees are also often coached ahead of time by North Korean officials as to what to say. Joo, 21, who has permanent resident status in the United States, was arrested in April for allegedly entering North Korea illegally across the Chinese border.

Pakistani military says 14 militants killed in restive area

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistan's military says its jets have killed 14 militants in a northwestern tribal region near the Afghan border. A statement released by the military says some important militant commanders were among those killed in Tuesday's airstrikes in the North Waziristan tribal region. It gave no details about the identity or nationality of the slain militants. The information could not be corroborated as journalists are barred from tribal areas. The Pakistani military has been carrying out a major operation in North Waziristan since 2014 and says it has killed over 2,800 militants after launching the offensive in the tribal area and elsewhere.

New Thai anti-graft law extends death penalty to foreigners

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand has enacted a new anti-corruption law that extends a maximum penalty of capital punishment to foreigners. Previous legislation provided various punishments, including a possible death penalty, for Thai officials convicted of bribery, though apparently no one was ever executed for the crime. The new statutes, which took effect July 9 and are part of a separate anti-corruption law, extend those punishments to non-Thais working for foreign governments and international organizations.

Trial begins for journalists charged with defaming Thai navy

PHUKET, Thailand (AP)—Testimony began Tuesday in a criminal defamation lawsuit filed by Thailand's navy against a small news website over a report it posted saying naval forces accepted money to assist or turn a blind eye to the trafficking of refugees from Myanmar by sea.

The navy also accused two journalists from the Phuketwan website with violating Thailand's Computer Crime Act by publishing the article online. If found guilty, Australian editor Alan Morison and his Thai colleague Chutima Sidasathien could each face up to seven years in prison and fines totaling 300,000 baht ($8,815).

The case has drawn widespread criticism from human rights and press freedom groups around the world.

The case came to trial following the discovery in May of dozens of bodies buried at several jungle camps on the Thai-Malaysian border where traffickers held migrants as prisoners. Many of the migrants are ethnic Rohingya from Myanmar who face persecution at home. In many cases, the migrants pay to be smuggled by ship, but are then detained by traffickers in Thailand who hold them until their families pay ransoms.

Human rights activists and foreign governments have long accused Thai authorities of collusion in the trafficking industry, but police, military and government officials have denied the allegations.

However, the recent publicity about the camps prompted a Thai government crackdown on trafficking, and several dozen people were arrested, including a Thai army general and local officials.

Stampede kills 27 during religious bathing festival in India

HYDERABAD, India (AP)—At least 27 people were killed and dozens injured Tuesday in a stampede during a Hindu religious bathing festival on a river bank in southern India.

The stampede occurred in Andhra Pradesh state as tens of thousands of people pushed forward to bathe in the Godavari River on the first day of the Pushkaralu festival, said Arun Kumar, a state administrator.

The stampede was triggered by some pilgrims who were trying to retrieve their shoes, which had fallen off in the rush to the river bank, police said.

Kumar said the incident, which occurred in the town of Rajahmundry, happened not long after the 12-day bathing festival started in the early morning hours.

AP

Thousands of people gather during a Hindu religious bathing festival on the bank of the Godavari River in Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh state, India, Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

Andhra Pradesh's chief minister, Chandrababu Naidu, said 27 people died in the stampede.

An additional 34 people were hospitalized with injuries, Kumar said.

Festival participants believe a bath in the river can rid them of their sins, and many believe it is more auspicious to bathe on the festival's first day.

V. Satyanarayana, a pilgrim who was at the site, said the stampede lasted nearly 20 minutes.

"It was a frightening situation, with women and children crying for help," he said. "The policemen on duty were helpless and it took more than an hour to bring the situation under control."

With the bodies of victims lying around, relatives wailed and cried for help.

Some pilgrims said ambulances took time to reach the site because the roads were overcrowded with people.

Officials said that a small place like Rajahmundry could not cope with the rush of hundreds of thousands of people, and that the situation became almost unmanageable.

Thousands of pilgrims, riding in buses, trains and other vehicles, started reaching the pilgrimage center two days ahead of the start of the festival.

World

Iranians welcome nuclear deal, hope for brighter economy

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Drivers honked their horns and dozens of Iranians cheered in a main square and boulevard of the capital Tehran on Tuesday, welcoming their country's landmark nuclear deal with world powers, which they hope will mean an end to isolation and sanctions that have crippled the economy.

The burst of celebrations underscored the hopes that many Iranians have pinned on the drawn-out talks. That public yearning for economic relief was crucial for winning moderate President Hassan Rouhani the breathing room to negotiate with Iran's nemesis the United States over imposing limits on the nuclear program.

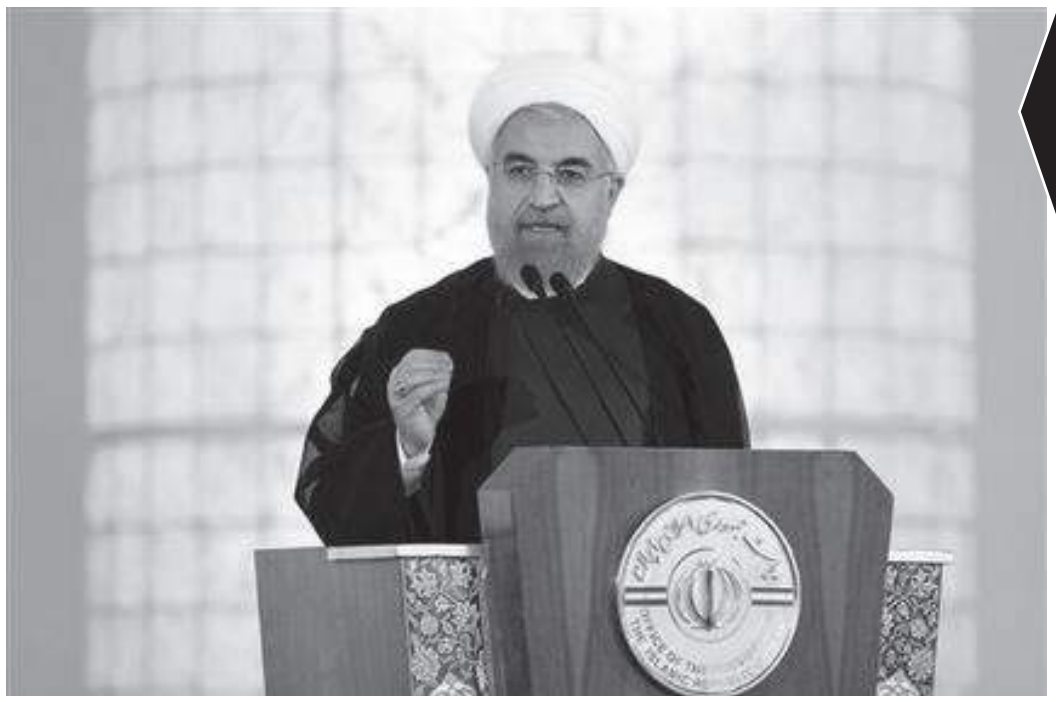
"I'm very happy," gushed Azizieh Habibi,a 46-year-old housewife with two college-age children, who was among those celebrating on Tehran's Vali-e Asr Avenue. Some waved flags, some had painted their faces in the flag's red, white and green colors, chanting thanks to Rouhani and his top negotiator, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

"My children will have better future since there is no threat of sanctions and restrictions anymore," said Habibi. "They may even go to the U.S. for more education."

A key question now will be whether powerful hard-liners, including the elite Revolutionary Guard, who have spoken staunchly against concessions on Iran's nuclear ambitions, will acquiesce to the accord. They were largely silent Tuesday after the deal's announcement, most likely waiting to see the stance of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who holds the final word on all state matters in Iran.

Khamenei met with Rouhani Tuesday night and expressed his "appreciation and thanks for the honest and diligent efforts" by the negotiating team, according to state TV.

The brief statement was in line with how Khamenei has played his cards close to his chest throughout the negotiations, allowing them continue while rarely weighing in directly beyond sometimes expressing skepticism.



AP
Iran's President Hassan Rouhani addresses the nation in a televised speech after a nuclear agreement was announced in Vienna, in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

Many were glued to television coverage of the deal's announcement, including President Barack Obama's address—only the second time Iranian state TV has aired him live. The first was his speech when an interim deal was reached earlier this year, paving the way for the new agreement.

At one Tehran electronics shop, men who had gathered around TV screens at the store clapped as Rouhani addressed the nation after Obama's appearance. Among them was shopkeeper Ali Hosseini, 29, who watched both leaders' speeches live.

"I am proud that my country has resolved this critical issue through talks not war," he said.

Many in the Iranian public were well aware of the potential for hardliners to try to undermine the accord.

"Will the revolutionary Guard support the deal?" Hashem Mohammad, 65, asked nervously after watching Rouhani's speech.

The Guard has made no prominent remarks in recent weeks, but media outlets close to them, like the Javan newspaper, have been critical of the negotiations. In its Tuesday edition Javan noted possible positive results of the talks like end of sanction against Iran but added, "even the most optimistic experts have expressed hopelessness about realizing such scenario."

The hard-line Rajanews website criticized the deal, saying Iran gave away too much. "Iran has accepted comprehensive limitations (on its nuclear program) in return for suspension of some sanctions."

In his address, the moderate Rouhani sought to sell the deal to the public, underlining that Iran's main goals were all achieved, particularly "continuing its nuclear activities, lifting sanctions," while acknowledging that concessions had to be made.

"Negotiation means give and take. We were not seeking charity, expecting someone to give us something free. We were after negotiations, a fair give and take," he said, vowing that the deal would bring "new hope and a better future for our youth."

Drug lord's escape tunnel an audacious feat of engineering

ALMOLOYA, Mexico (AP)—Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, the most wanted of Mexico's drug lords, would have breezed along the mile-long tunnel dug just for him on a specially modified motorcycle or one of the two carts it pushed on two steel rails.

A visit on Tuesday by journalists to the tunnel's exit in an unfinished barn near the prison that held Guzman provided a look at the last few yards that the leader of the Sinaloa cartel traversed to make his second escape from a Mexican maximum-security lockup.

Tracks guiding the modified motorcycle end two or three steps from the base of a wooden ladder with 17 rungs that he would have scrambled up. The air in the tunnel is warm and humid and fine dust coats everything.

Reaching the top, a step leads into a small basement dominated by a blue generator as big as a compact car.

Then it is six strides to another ladder.

One, two, three steps up. The air thins. The temperature drops 10 degrees.

Four. Five. Six, the last rung. One more step and Guzman stood on the dusty floor of the barn, where the digging crew had left 4-inch by 4-inch wooden beams, 8-foot- tall coils of steel mesh, gallons of hydraulic fluid, 10-foot lengths of PVC pipe and an electric disc saw.

Seven strides and the man who Mexico's government said would not repeat his 2001 prison escape stepped through a sliding steel door into the chilly night on the high plain west of the capital.

For the first time since his latest capture, on Feb. 22, 2014, Guzman was a free man.

Authorities also released surveillance video of Guzman's last moments in prison. A recording by a camera in his cell shows him walking to the bed, where he sits and appears to change his shoes.

He then walks to the shower and toilet area, behind a low dividing wall of about waist height, and simply disappears. Another video filmed after the escape shows the gaping square hole cut into what appears to be the floor of the shower.

The ingenuity and audacity of the caper was breathtaking.

Buy a piece of land a mile from Mexico's most secure prison, but in the middle of farm fields. Throw up a shoddy, concrete block structure that doesn't look out of place. Build a wall to hide the dirt. Get to work.

Experts have said the tunnel would have been more than a year in planning and building. The digging would have caused noise. The entrance was in a place beyond the view of security cameras at Mexico's toughest prison.

CERN scientists claim discovery of new particles

BERLIN (AP)—A new kind of subatomic particle called the pentaquark has been detected for the first time, the European Organization for Nuclear Research said Tuesday.

The lab, known by its French acronym CERN, said the findings were made by a team of scientists working on the LHCb experiment, one of the four at its Large Hadron Collider.

The existence of pentaquarks was first proposed in the 1960s by American physicists Murray Gell-Mann and Georg Zweig. Gell-Mann, who received the Nobel Prize in 1969, coined the term "quark" to describe the building blocks that make up hadrons—subatomic particles such as the proton and the neutron.

Until recently, only hadrons with two or three quarks had been found. In recent years, physicists have seen evidence of hadrons made up of four quarks, called tetraquarks.

Previous claims to the detection of pentaquarks, containing four quarks and an anti-quark, have been refuted. But experts said the new results from CERN, which have been submitted to the journal Physical Review Letters, appear credible.

"It is indeed compelling, in part because of the clarity of their experimental data, but also because I can't find a viable alternative explanation," said Eric Swanson, a theoretical physicist at the University of Pittsburgh.

Swanson, who wasn't involved with the LHCb experiment, said proof of the existence of pentaquarks would be a major boost for physics.

"Every particle we're aware of, except for a few oddballs, is made up of quark and anti-quark, or three quarks. That's what builds up the mass of the universe, what makes you and me and the Earth and the sun," he said. "This, if verified, should be the beginning of a whole new form of matter."

Guy Wilkinson, a spokesman for the LHCb experiment team, said studying pentaquarks may help scientists to better understand "how ordinary matter, the protons and neutrons from which we're all made, is constituted."

The discovery would be the second major find at the Large Hadron Collider, which is used by physicists from around the world. The collider was instrumental in the discovery of the Higgs boson, a subatomic particle that had long been theorized but never confirmed until 2013.

The collider is housed in a 27-kilometer (16.8-mile) tunnel beneath the Swiss-French border near Geneva. It was recently given a $150 million upgrade that allows atoms to be smashed together with even greater force, allowing it to recreate conditions similar to those during the earliest moments of the universe.

Nairobi mall to re-open 2 years after extremist attack

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Nairobi's Westgate Mall is to re-open Saturday, nearly two years after it was attacked by Somalia's Islamic extremist rebels who killed at least 67 people, Kenyan officials said Tuesday.

The mall has been extensively refurbished since the devastating four-day siege.

The violence erupted on Sept. 21, 2013 when four Islamic militants entered the mall and fired on shoppers. Kenyan police and army responded hours later and the gunmen held the building for four days. The four attackers are believed to have died from smoke inhalation from a fire that collapsed part of the roof. The mall was left in shambles, with bullet-scarred walls, shattered windows, flooded floors and bloodstains. Kenyan army soldiers were also accused of looting shops.

Kenya has rebounded from the violence, said Nairobi Governor Evans Kidero, who toured the mall on Tuesday.

"The indomitable Kenyan spirit prevailed, they didn't break our spirit," Kidero said. Every business that had a shop in the mall is back, Kidero said.

Shoppers should turn out Saturday for the mall's re-opening, said Kidero. Nairobi is safe and U.S .President Barack Obama's upcoming visit is testament to Kenya's security, he said. The U.S. State Department this week issued a travel warning to its citizens that extremists could target the upcoming Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi later this month, which will be attended by Obama.

One of those returning to the mall will be Charlse Kimondo, a worker at the Nakumatt Supermarket in the mall. On the day of the attack he was in a storeroom when he heard gunshots and screams. He escaped but was shocked by the bloodbath. Counselling sessions helped him get over the ordeal and return to work.

Al-Shabab said the Westgate attack was in retaliation for Kenya sending troops to Somalia in 2011 to fight the Islamic extremist rebels.

Focus

Iran nuclear deal: Fine 'new chapter' or a 'historic mistake'?

VIENNA (AP)—Overcoming decades of hostility, Iran, the United States, and five other world powers struck a historic accord Tuesday to check Tehran's nuclear efforts short of building a bomb. The agreement could give Iran access to billions in frozen assets and oil revenue, stave off more U.S. military action in the Middle East and reshape the tumultuous region.

The deal sets in motion a years-long test of Iran's willingness to keep its promises to the world—and the ability of international inspectors to monitor compliance. It also sets the White House up for a contentious fight with a wary Congress and more rocky relations with Israel, whose leaders furiously opposed the agreement.

Appealing to skeptics, President Barack Obama declared that the accord "offers an opportunity to move in a new direction. We should seize it."

Under terms of the deal, the culmination of 20 months of arduous diplomacy, Iran must dismantle much of its nuclear program in order to secure relief from biting sanctions that have battered its economy. International inspectors can now press for visits to Iran's military facilities, though access is not guaranteed. Centrifuges will keep spinning, though in lesser quantities, and uranium can still be enriched, though at lower levels.

In a key compromise, Iran agreed to continuation of the U.N.'s arms embargo on the country for up to five more years and ballistic missile restrictions for up to eight years. Washington had sought to keep the arms ban in place, while Russia and China joined Iran in pushing for an immediate suspension.

On the streets of Tehran, Iranians honked their horns and celebrated in the city's main square. President Hassan Rouhani said a "new chapter" had begun in his nation's relations with the world, even as he denied Iran had ever pursued a nuclear weapon.

While the U.S. partnered in the talks with Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China, the decades of tensions between the U.S. and Iran put the two countries at the forefront of the negotiations.

Whether the nuclear rapprochement will spark a broader thaw is unclear. Nearly 40 years after Iran's Islamic revolution and the hostage-taking at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the country's hardliners remain hostile toward Washington. The U.S. and its allies also have deep concerns about Iran's support for terrorism in the Middle East and its detention of several American citizens.

With key restrictions on Iran's nuclear program required for only a decade, opponents of the deal say it simply delays Tehran's pursuit of the bomb. Critics also say Iran will use new wealth from sanctions relief to double-down other destabilizing activities in the region.

Iran stands to receive more than $100 billion in assets that have been frozen overseas and benefit from an end to various financial restrictions on Iranian banks. Iran could also sell more oil, bringing down crude prices.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who lobbied unceasingly against a deal, called it a "stunning historic mistake" and warned that his country would not be bound by it. Netanyahu strongly hinted that Israeli military action to destroy Tehran's nuclear program remains an option.

> *Whether the nuclear rapprochement will spark a broader thaw is unclear. Nearly 40 years after Iran's Islamic revolution and the hostage-taking at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, the country's hardliners remain hostile toward Washington. The U.S. and its allies also have deep concerns about Iran's support for terrorism in the Middle East and its detention of several American citizens.*

Obama and Netanyahu, who have long had a cool relationship, spoke by phone Tuesday. White House officials said Obama also called King Salman of Saudi Arabia, one of the many Sunni Arab rivals of Shiite Iran who have expressed concerns about the deal.

On Capitol Hill, Republicans accused Obama of making too many concessions. House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio said lawmakers "will fight a bad deal that is wrong for our national security and wrong for our country." GOP presidential hopefuls also panned the deal, some vowing to scrap it if elected to succeed Obama.

Obama did get a crucial show of support from Hillary Rodham Clinton, his former secretary of state and the likely Democratic presidential nominee. She praised the deal as an important step toward "putting the lid on Iran's nuclear program."

Clinton's support could give some Democratic lawmakers more confidence in standing with Obama as he tries to hold off congressional efforts to disrupt the deal. Congress has 60 days to review it and can try to prevent Obama from waiving sanctions on Iran as promised in the negotiations.

The president reiterated that he would veto any legislation aimed at upending the agreement. Defending it, he said, "No deal means a greater chance of more war in the Middle East."

The deal comes after years of international diplomacy that until recently were defined by failure. Breaks in the talks sometimes lasted for months, and Iran's nascent nuclear program expanded into one that Western intelligence agencies saw as only months away from weapons capacity. The U.S. and Israel both threatened military action.

Obama took office in 2009 promising to keep the door open for greater engagement with Iran, even as he ratcheted up economic sanctions. In 2012, he authorized secret talks that helped lay the groundwork for the formal negotiations that stretched over the past two years.

The final weeks were marked by marathon meetings in Vienna, three blown deadlines and threats by top American and Iranian diplomats to walk away.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who did most of the bargaining with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, said persistence paid off. "Believe me, had we been willing to settle for a lesser deal we would have finished this negotiation a long time ago," he said.

The breakthrough came after several key compromises.

Iran agreed to a continuation of the arms embargo for up to five more years, though it could end earlier if the International Atomic Energy Agency clears Iran of any current work on nuclear weapons. A similar condition was put on U.N. restrictions on the transfer of ballistic missile technology to Tehran, which could last for up to eight more years, according to diplomats.

Washington had sought to maintain the ban on Iran importing and exporting weapons, concerned that an Islamic Republic flush with cash from sanctions relief would expand its military assistance for Syrian President Bashar Assad's government, Yemen's Houthi rebels, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah and other forces opposing America's Mideast allies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Another significant agreement will allow U.N. inspectors to press for visits to Iranian military sites as part of their monitoring duties, something Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has opposed. However, access isn't guaranteed and could be delayed, a condition that critics of the deal are sure to seize on.

Under the accord, Tehran would have the right to challenge U.N requests, and an arbitration board composed of Iran and the six world powers would then decide. The IAEA also wants to complete its long-stymied investigation of past weapons work by Iran, and the U.S. says Iranian cooperation is needed for all economic sanctions to be lifted.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano said Tuesday his agency and Iran had signed a "roadmap" to resolve outstanding concerns, hopefully by mid-December.

Life & Style

After months of anticipation, new Harper Lee novel released

NEW YORK (AP)—Shortly after sunrise Tuesday, the doors opened at the Old Courthouse Museum in Monroeville, Alabama, and a bell tolled.

In the hometown and residence of Harper Lee, it was time to start a marathon and occasionally painful reading of "Go Set a Watchman," the second book no one ever thought they would see from the author of "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Lee fans worldwide stayed up late, awakened early and dashed off during meal breaks to pick up a copy of the year's most anticipated novel, "Go Set a Watchman," which came out Tuesday after months of the most unusual pre-publication attention in memory. From the moment publisher HarperCollins announced "Watchman" in early February, reactions of ecstatic disbelief have been shadowed by concerns about the book's quality, the 89-year-old Lee's involvement in the release and the jarring transformation of Atticus Finch.

"I don't think it's going to damage Harper Lee's legacy," Susan Scullin, a reading teacher in New York City, said of "Watchman" as she prepared to buy a copy at the Barnes & Noble in Manhattan's Union Square

"It might damage Atticus Finch's legacy, and that makes me a little nervous."

Booksellers from Cambridge, Massachusetts to Downers Grove, Illinois opened at midnight Tuesday, while Barnes & Noble stores began selling copies at 7 a.m., two hours earlier than usual. Pre-orders have already made "Go Set a Watchman" one of the year's top books and did not let up despite lukewarm reviews and the unwelcome news that Finch, one of the all-time literary heroes, was a bigot in "Watchman."

Amazon.com has called "Watchman" its most popular pre-order since the last Harry Potter book, which came out in 2007. At Barnes & Noble, the comparisons were not to a phenomenon like Potter, but to a follow up: Mary Amicucci, the superstore chain's vice president for adult trade and children's books, said that pre-orders were the highest since the 2009 release of Dan Brown's "The Lost Symbol," his first novel after "The Da Vinci Code" and itself a million seller.

Sales for "Mockingbird," already a consistent favorite, have doubled at Barnes & Noble since "Watchman" was announced. The book's first printing exceeds 2 million copies.

In slightly varying accounts, Lee attorney Tonja Carter has said she came upon the "Watchman" manuscript last year while looking through some of the author's papers. "Watchman" was written before "Mockingbird," which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961. But it takes place 20 years later, in the 1950s. Carter and literary agent Andrew Nurnberg have also speculated that Lee planned a trilogy of novels, although HarperCollins in its "Watchman" press notes cited "scant reference to support this theory."

"Watchman" finds a grown-up Scout, now living in New York, visiting her native Maycomb, Alabama, and observing a community terrified by the Supreme Court's recent ruling that school segregation was unconstitutional. Scout herself is shaken when among those joining the racist mob is the man who in "Mockingbird" stood against it, her father, Atticus.

In Monroeville, which has long had an ambivalent relationship with Lee, only around 20 people were in attendance as volunteers took turns reading from "Watchman." Ann-Michael Winstead, 20, endured reciting Atticus' ugly warning to Scout: "Do you want your children going to a school that's been dragged down to accommodate Negro children?"

Winstead wiped her eyes after the reading.

"It was tough. You grow up with this book ('Mockingbird') ... You think of him as the perfect gentleman, colorblind," she said as she choked back tears.

At the Waterstones bookstore in London's Piccadilly Circus, shoppers were hopeful as they used their lunch hour Tuesday to pick up copies of "Go Set a Watchman." Some said they planned it to be their holiday reading, others said they wanted to know more about the beloved characters in "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Lisa Coutts said her love of "Mockingbird" made her buy "Watchman"—it's the first hardback book she has ever purchased.

"'To Kill a Mockingbird' is my favorite book of all time," said Coutts, 42. "I read it at school. It's just a book I have to read during my holiday. I loved it and I thought, `Give it a go.'"

Lee, also known as Nelle, was expected to spend the day as she usually does at the 15-person assisted-living facility in Monroeville where she is closely guarded and only a short list of pre-approved visitors are allowed to see her.

Wayne Flynt, a historian and author, said he met with her on Monday and handed her an inch-thick stack of news articles and printouts about the release of "Watchman."

"She chortled," Flynt told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "She's absolutely delighted. I think she's a bit overwhelmed."

While Lee's day is expected to be normal, "normal means monotonous and boring, except when you just took over the media of the entire world, in which case it's a lot more exciting," he said.

Harper Lee's hometown celebrates release of 'Watchman'

MONROEVILLE, Ala. (AP)—Author Harper Lee's hometown of Monroeville buzzed with excitement Tuesday over the release of her novel "Go Set a Watchman," which was actually the first draft of the Pulitzer Prize-winning "To Kill a Mockingbird."

Both books are set in the fictitious town of Maycomb, which was modeled after Monroeville. A full day of celebrations unfolded in the small Alabama town with parties, readings and tours.

Amid the hoopla, there also was trepidation and disbelief that the character Atticus Finch, the model of integrity who defended a black man wrongly accused of rape in the 1930s in "Mockingbird," is portrayed as a racist 20 years later in "Watchman."

Here are some scenes from Monroeville.

How were the readings received?

Throughout the day, volunteers took turns reading from "Watchman" inside the high-ceilinged courtroom of the old Monroe County Courthouse.

Ann-Michael Winstead, of North Carolina, read part of the book where Atticus Finch defends segregation in a verbal showdown with daughter Jean Louise.

"Do you want your children going to a school that's been dragged down to accommodate Negro children," Finch asks his daughter.

After the reading, Winstead wiped tears from her eyes.

"It was tough. You grow up with this book. ... You think of him as the perfect gentleman, colorblind," the 20-year-old Winstead said.

People came and went in the courtroom throughout the day, with as many as 20 people listening at a time.

Winstead read one passage that included a racial slur. She said while it was uncomfortable, she wasn't going to change Lee's words.

Where is Lee?

Lee, also known as Nelle, is expected to spend the day as she usually does at the 15-person assisted-living facility where she is closely guarded and only a short list of pre-approved visitors are allowed to see her.

Wayne Flynt, a historian and author, said he visited her on Monday and handed her an inch-thick stack of news articles and printouts from around the world about the release of "Watchman."

"She chortled," Flynt told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "She's absolutely delighted. I think she's a bit overwhelmed."

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Flynt said he summarized some of the reviews to Lee, who is 89 and mostly deaf and blind.

"She is processing all of this with good humor and a little bit of understanding of how over the top it is," Flynt said.

Town owes identity to 'Mockingbird'

Monroeville, the sleepy city of 6,000, has forever intertwined its identity with "Mockingbird." The rarely seen Lee, in a way, is the town's largest commodity.

"Watchman" put both back in the international spotlight.

News trucks parked beside the magnolia trees outside the old courthouse. Tourists frantically waved hand-held paper fans, emblazoned with the image of the "Watchman" book jacket as they tried to cool themselves in 98-degree heat.

"She's the town's legacy of course. The town depends on her. She's like the lifeblood of the town," said Spencer Madrie, owner of a Monroeville book store.

Remembering the past

For some, "Watchman" is a poignant but painful reminder of the segregation and prejudice that existed in Monroeville in the 1950s.

Mary Tucker, who is black, said she remembered going into a Monroeville dress shop and being told she could only try the dress on over her clothes, not next to her skin.

"We couldn't sit downstairs at the movies, so of course we didn't go," she said.

Tucker said the portrayal of Atticus Finch in "Watchman"—he attends White Citizens' Council meetings and defends segregation—would have been an accurate depiction of how many prominent Monroeville men felt at the time.

Early bird

By Tuesday morning, Alice Brantley had already read the first third of "Watchman," which was written before "Mockingbird," even though it takes place two decades later.

"It doesn't read like a first draft," she said. "But it doesn't read like a final version either."

She said she made the eight-hour drive from Denton, Georgia, for all the weekend's activities in Monroeville.

Reading for a crowd

Shortly after sunrise, the doors of the Old Courthouse Museum opened and a bell tolled to mark the start of a marathon reading of "Watchman."

Among those signing up was Candy Smith, 49. She got there early after a nearly two-hour trip from Montgomery and was asked to be the first speaker in a reading expected to last eight hours.

"I love `To Kill a Mockingbird.' I didn't know if I'd get a chance to read, but I'm excited," Smith said.

The museum is dedicated to telling a story of Lee and childhood friend Truman Capote. The reading is in the old courtroom where Lee's father practiced law. The "Mockingbird" movie's courtroom is an almost identical replica of the one in Monroeville.

Did Lee want to release the book?

Before the February announcement of the discovery and release of "Watchman," Lee, had long said she wouldn't publish another novel.

Concerns linger in Monroeville over whether the publication is something Lee truly wanted.

"I don't think that Nelle, if she were really able to think as she was able to years ago, if she would have approved the book," said Mary Tucker, a former Old Courthouse Museum board member who said she used to visit with Lee at the assisted-living facility.

Flynt, the historian, dismissed concerns that the author might have been manipulated into releasing the book. He said "Watchman" provides a more complex and difficult look at race in a small southern town.

"`Mockingbird' is black and white. The morality is a child's morality. `Go Set a Watchman is an adult's morality," Flynt said.

A jarring transformation

The new novel traces Scout Finch's return home to Maycomb in the 1950s. She finds that her father, Atticus, has changed. News of his transformation came out in reviews ahead of the "Watchman" release.

"I'm nervous. I'm reserving opinion, but I'm ready to be mad. He's the epitome of the moral compass," said Cher Caldwell, a 43-year-old English teacher from Kentucky.

Judy May said she's tried to stay away from spoilers but is concerned about a different Atticus.

"Atticus has been a hero-type person through our lives here in Monroe County and the whole world actually. It would be pretty disappointing," May said. "But at the same time, you have to kind of remind yourself he was human at the time he was raised."

Jimmy Fallon back at 'Tonight' following gruesome injury

NEW YORK (AP)—"Tonight" show host Jimmy Fallon spent 10 days in a hospital intensive care unit after tripping in his kitchen and injuring a finger so badly it required six hours of microsurgery to save.

The comic was back at work Monday for the first time following the June 26 accident in his New York home, wearing a cast on his left hand that extended nearly to the fingernail of his ring finger. His wedding ring caught on a surface as he tried to break his fall.

Fallon

"I tripped and fell in our kitchen on a braided rug that my wife loves," he said. "I can't wait to burn it to the ground."

His badly bent finger looking like a "horror movie," Fallon took a cab to an emergency room. He was told what he thought was a broken finger was much more complicated, and was sent to another hospital. He said he was told that many people with the same injury lose their finger.

The complicated surgery involved taking a vein from his foot to help repair the finger.

Ten days in the hospital made Fallon a little stir crazy.

"I started losing it halfway through," he said. "I started reading books about the meaning of life."

He wasn't kidding, as Fallon pulled out a paperback titled "Man's Search for Meaning." And he said it crystallized his own thoughts about what he should be doing.

"This is the meaning of my life," the 40-year-old comic said. "I belong on TV ... if anyone's suffering at all, this is my job. I'm here to make you laugh. I'm here to make you have a good time."

It was a rough summer break for NBC's "Tonight" show crew. Fallon's announcing sidekick, Steve Higgins, said he spent much of the time in bed with Lyme Disease.

The advantage of being a comedian, Fallon said, is that he got plenty of email messages from friends that made him laugh. And it made him see the humor in his fall.

"If it was me watching me," he said, "I would laugh."

Judge trims 'Blurred Lines' song dispute verdict to $5.3M

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- A judge on Tuesday trimmed more than $2 million from a verdict against Robin Thicke and Pharrell Williams over their hit "Blurred Lines," but Marvin Gaye's family will also get a significant share of future earnings from the 2013 hit song.

U.S. District Judge John A. Kronstadt ruled that the copyright infringement verdict a jury reached in March should be cut from nearly $7.4 million to $5.3 million. The judge's ruling, however, gives Gaye's family 50 percent of the song's future royalties.

Kronstadt's 56-page ruling dealt with several post-trial issues, including a request by Thicke and Williams' lawyers for a new trial. The judge rejected that motion, and also refused to issue an injunction requested by Gaye's family that would have temporarily blocked sales and performance of "Blurred Lines."

The jury in March sided with Gaye's family, who contended "Blurred Lines" copied Marvin Gaye's 1977 hit "Got to Give It Up."

Jurors found that rapper T.I., who received songwriting credit and a share of the royalties, did not commit copyright infringement, but Kronstadt ruled Tuesday that other elements of the jury's verdict mean he must be included in the judgment.

Howard King, an attorney for Thicke and Williams, said he was still reviewing the ruling and had no immediate comment.

"Mr. Thicke and Williams, and their legal team, among others, went on a public relations campaign after the jury's verdict criticizing the verdict and saying the evidence did not support the finding of copyright infringement, and did not believe the decision on liability would therefore stand," the Gaye family's attorney, Richard Busch, wrote in a statement.

Goldberg stands down as Cosby defender

In this April 24, 2015 file photo, Whoopi Goldberg attends Variety's Power of Women Luncheon at Cipriani Midtown, in New York. AP

NEW YORK (AP)—Bill Cosby's biggest public defender, Whoopi Goldberg, is backing off her support after getting some legal advice Tuesday on the daytime talk show "The View."

Goldberg said that "all of the information that's out there kind of points to (Cosby's) guilt."

Goldberg defended Cosby last week after the release of court documents showed the comic admitted in 2005 to obtaining Quaaludes with the intent of giving them to women he wanted to have sex with. More than two dozen women have accused Cosby of sexual misconduct in the past four decades, and many of them alleged that he drugged them before sex.

A day after defending him on the air, Goldberg angrily reacted to people who attacked her on social media. She said she believed in a person's innocence until proven guilty in a court of law.

So "The View" brought on ABC News legal analyst Daniel Abrams Tuesday to explain that because of the statute of limitations in various states, it is very unlikely that any of the women making accusations against Cosby will be able to take him to court.

Essentially, the only recourse for many of these women is the court of public opinion, Abrams said.

"I mean, it is impossible to ignore the consistency of these stories," Abrams said.

Goldberg said the fact that the passage of time prevents many of these women from taking their accusations to court is "a shock to me."

"I can't say any more `innocent until proven guilty,' can't say that anymore," Goldberg said, "because there's no way to prove it. We are the only proof that folks have. We're the only backup they have."

She urged viewers to contact their state representatives regarding laws about statutes of limitations on sexual assault cases.

There was no immediate comment from Cosby's representatives. The comedian made a point of using his Twitter feed last December to thank Goldberg for supporting him.

Actor Jesse Eisenberg compares Comic-Con to genocide

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Jesse Eisenberg compared his experience of facing screaming fans at Comic-Con to genocide, saying the raucous crowd was "terrifying."

"It is like being screamed at by thousands of people. I don't know what the experience is throughout history, probably some kind of genocide. I can't think of anything that's equivalent," Eisenberg, who plays Lex Luthor in next year's "Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice," said of the massive San Diego convention that ended Sunday.

On Tuesday, in an interview alongside Jason Segel promoting their film "The End of the Tour," Eisenberg explained his response.

"Maybe on some cellular memory level, that's the only thing that seems like an equivalent social experience," he said. "Even if they're saying nice things, just being shouted at by thousands of people, it's horrifying."

Segel, who has attended Comic-Con in the past, chimed in: "Whether it's positive or negative, it's still a mob."

"Yeah, it's a mob. Yeah. They were one torch away from burning me," Eisenberg said. "I'm a normal person with like normal reactions to things, so of course it's going to be terrifying. If you like that kind of thing and feed off of it in some way, you must have a miserable life."

"You know, but it's such an honor to be a part of the film. No, I mean everybody liked the movie. That was the important thing. The screaming was terrifying. ... We were on the kind of scary end of it."

In "The End of the Tour," Eisenberg plays David Lipsky, a journalist interviewing writer David Foster Wallace during the promotional tour for Wallace's novel "Infinite Jest." Segal plays Wallace.

Teacher and heroin addict share a 'crazy chemistry'

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 24-year-old teacher and graduate student. I have started dating a new man, "Winston," who makes me feel incredible. We have crazy chemistry like I've never had before, and our personalities work perfectly together.

Here's the problem. Winston is a recovering heroin addict with horrible credit and two felony charges related to having stolen money from his parents when he was desperate for drugs.

I know what you're thinking—I'd be an idiot for dating someone like this, right? But Winston and I have had heartfelt talks and he revealed a troubled upbringing that helped me understand where his addiction came from. He's in a rehab program to try to get his life together.

I've dated a lot of guys. All I've ever wanted is someone who will give me "butterflies" for the rest of my life, and Winston may be the guy. He's attentive, affectionate and loving. He treats me like a princess. I understand his past will cause financial strain. Isn't it more important to have a man who treats me right than one with a lot of earning potential? Please give me some advice.

DREAM COME TRUE IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR DREAM: You have been seeing Winston for HOW long? Has he completed his rehab and been able to maintain his sober lifestyle for a long enough time that the chances are it will continue?

Few things are as exciting as infatuation—every one of our senses is heightened. You say you feel "butterflies," but what if you wind up with only a moth-eaten carpet? This is not to say that Winston isn't a wonderful person—many former addicts can be. However, I think it's premature for you to consider a future with him until you are sure about his stability.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My widowed 86-year-old mom was living by herself. My unmarried sister, "Anne," has become ill and has moved in with Mom. Anne wanted a dog. At first Mom was against it because they both have cats, but she finally gave in and Anne got a year-old beagle mix from the dog rescue.

I have been afraid of dogs since I was little. My family knows this. Usually, once I get to know a dog I'm OK, and I have had several of my own. But this animal has abandonment and abuse issues. He's very aggressive and barks, growls and lunges at anyone who comes into the house. It makes me afraid, so I have quit visiting and hardly ever drop by.

Mom and Anne have very little control over the dog. I worry that in an emergency—whether for Mom or Anne—the EMTs would not be able to get past the animal. What can I do?

SCARED IN IOWA

DEAR SCARED: Explain to them that not all emergency medical technicians (EMTs) have been formally trained to handle unruly or vicious animals, and precious time might be lost. If your sister or mother wasn't around to control the dog and the EMTs were unable to lure it to another room, animal control would have to be summoned or a neighbor found who could assist, and the consequences could be serious. Then cross your fingers that nothing bad happens.

■■■

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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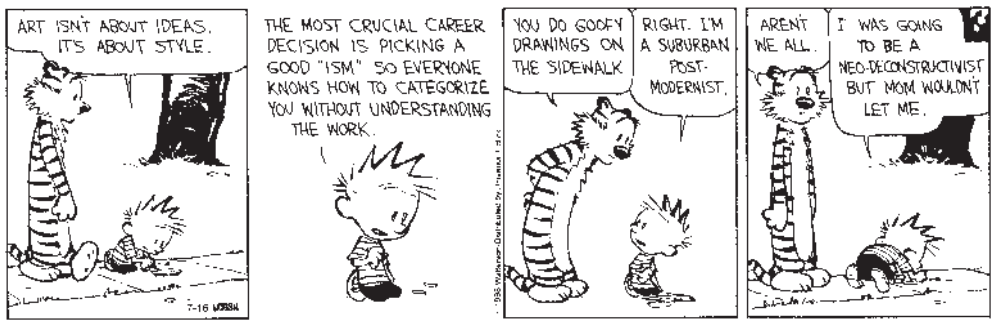
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

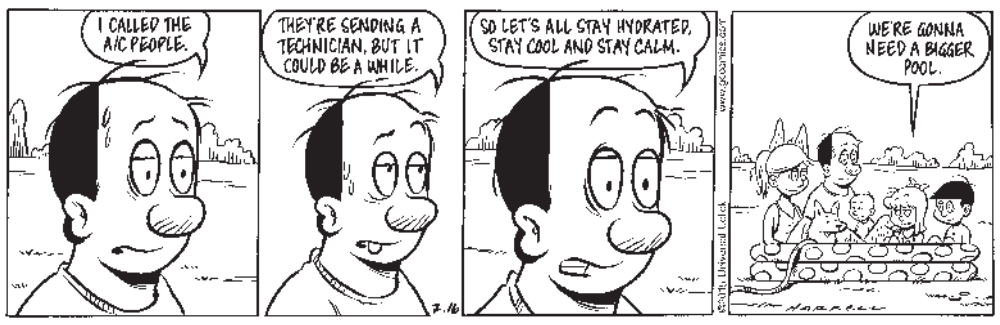

ART ISN'T ABOUT IDEAS. IT'S ABOUT STYLE.
THE MOST CRUCIAL CAREER DECISION IS PICKING A GOOD "ISM" SO EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO CATEGORIZE YOU WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING THE WORK.
YOU DO GOOFY DRAWINGS ON THE SIDEWALK
RIGHT. I'M A SUBURBAN POST-MODERNIST.
AREN'T WE ALL.
I WAS GOING TO BE A NEO-DECONSTRUCTIVIST BUT MOM WOULDN'T LET ME.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I CALLED THE A/C PEOPLE.
THEY'RE SENDING A TECHNICIAN, BUT IT COULD BE A WHILE.
SO LET'S ALL STAY HYDRATED, STAY COOL AND STAY CALM.
WE'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER POOL.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Vacationing
4 Doctrines
8 Declaration of Independence's first word
12 Atmosphere
13 Cold-climate bird
14 Vagrant
15 Voluntary choice
17 Grandson of Eve
18 Before
19 G.I. John?
21 Hooded snakes
24 Fawn's mom
25 Muhammad or Laila
26 Carpet
28 Floats gently
32 Surround
34 — Zedong
36 Snare
37 Alpine song
39 Valentine misspelling
41 Yale student
42 Workout venue
44 Turn down
46 Sudden intensification
50 Fed. med. research org.
51 Emanation
52 Rapid decline
56 Incursion
57 Links warning
58 "The Matrix" role
59 Stubborn critter
60 Mast
61 Rotation duration

DOWN
1 Lummox
2 Evergreen type
3 Lynyrd Skynyrd classic
4 "It's the truth!"
5 Hit the slopes
6 — over (consider)
7 Diet entree
8 In consequence of which
9 "— soit qui mal y pense"
10 Black, to bards
11 Schnozz
16 Blunder
20 Haul behind
21 Shrewd
22 Hodgepodge
23 Total
27 Cowboy's sweetie
29 Drawn without mechanical aid
30 Body powder
31 Skewer
33 Humiliate
35 "— Town"
38 Caustic chemical
40 Superficiality
43 Bungles
45 Peter Pan rival
46 MacDonald's place
47 Waikiki wingding
48 Seed coat
49 Item on stage
53 Geological period
54 Meadow
55 Myrna of Hollywood

Solution time: 25 mins.

F	U	A		C	O	B	B		A	P	S	E	
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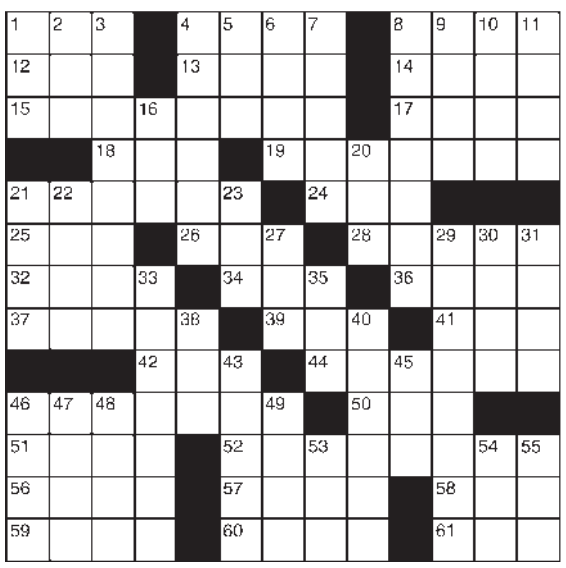
			A	R	L	O		E	S	T	E	R	
M	A	I	N	D	I	S	H		T	O	T	E	
A	R	T		S	E	T	U	P		D	N	A	
M	I	L	D		D	I	S	H	S	O	A	P	
A	D	L	I	B		A	H	A	B				
			S	O	S			L	A	I	T	Y	
S	O	A	P	O	P	E	R	A		O	R	C	
H	U	G	E		A	V	O	N		N	I	L	
E	T	A	L		M	A	N	X		S	O	P	

Yesterday's answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: AnnaLynne McCord, 28; Corey Feldman, 44; Will Ferrell, 48; Phoebe Cates, 52.

Happy Birthday: Stay on top of what everyone around you is doing. Don't feel obligated to make an impulsive move or decision. Weigh the pros and cons of every option thoroughly before moving forward. Use your past experiences coupled with your insight to make the best choices for you. Strive for a personal approach in everything you do. Your numbers are 3, 9, 14, 21, 27, 33, 45.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Don't let trivial matters escalate into a dilemma that occupies you mentally, physically and emotionally. Step away from personal problems and do your best to excel professionally in order to boost your confidence and put your personal life in perspective. ✪✪

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Say what's on your mind and you will clear up any misunderstandings. Take control of your situation at home and at work. No one will recognize what you have to offer if you don't speak up. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Start a new project or volunteer for something you believe in. Don't limit what you can do because someone puts demands on your time. Think matters through and find new ways to take care of your responsibilities and do the things you enjoy. ✪✪✪

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Put your energy into creative endeavors and finding out what you can about your roots or cultural background. The more you discover, the easier it will be to understand what you are searching for spiritually, philosophically and emotionally. ✪✪✪

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't share your financial history with anyone. It's important not to put yourself in a vulnerable position. An offer made will tempt you, but before you decide to take a chance, check the fine print. Not everyone will be honest. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can make a difference. Take matters into your own hands and be progressive when dealing with matters that concern you personally or professionally. Speak up and offer solutions and you will be heard. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Listen carefully and keep your distance from anyone who shows unpredictable or argumentative tendencies. Check out products, items or philosophies that will lead to self-improvement or a change in important relationships. Romance is encouraged and will improve your life. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Check out destinations, courses or people you find interesting. You can make some interesting changes to the way you live that will benefit you mentally and financially. Don't cut corners when it comes to fact-finding or doing research. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): It's time to update your surroundings. When it comes to expenses, whether it's a new entertainment center or a home renovation, be diligent about sticking to a budget. Romance is highlighted and will boost your love life. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't feel compelled to make a decision prematurely. Time is on your side, and taking the safe route will ensure that you are not taken advantage of by a fast-talker. Change can be good, but only if it's on your terms. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Changes regarding your relationships with others will be questionable. Don't be too quick to agree to something you haven't given enough thought to. It's okay to want to please someone, but not if it's going to cost you emotionally or financially. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Expand and express your ideas. You have great plans and ideas to share, and with the right audience you will receive support to help you make your dreams come true. Do your best to seal a deal in ink. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are sensitive, helpful and responsible. You are dignified and popular.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

6		8				7		1
			5		3			
5								9
	5		7		2		4	
	6		1		9		8	
9								3
			2		6			
7		3				2		5

Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	5	3	1	9	6	2	7	8
7	6	2	3	8	5	9	4	1
9	8	1	4	7	2	3	6	5
8	9	6	7	1	3	4	5	2
1	2	7	5	4	8	6	3	9
5	3	4	2	6	9	8	1	7
6	4	8	9	5	1	7	2	3
3	1	9	6	2	7	5	8	4
2	7	5	8	3	4	1	9	6

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

STAGES OF SLEEP Solution: 7 letters

S	A	S	L	A	V	R	E	T	N	I	P	E	E	D
N	N	H	S	M	A	E	R	D	G	I	H	T	A	B
R	T	O	P	S	S	T	F	N	I	R	A	A	T	R
E	E	H	I	L	B	E	E	I	Y	P	O	R	O	H
T	F	L	G	T	A	E	S	B	V	G	A	W	B	Y
T	R	O	A	I	A	C	D	A	E	E	R	R	T	T
A	E	R	U	X	N	N	I	T	H	R	E	E	F	H
P	Q	T	R	R	E	O	I	X	I	P	A	I	N	M
S	U	H	U	E	E	D	I	C	O	M	R	C	W	E
E	E	G	O	S	A	M	R	T	U	D	E	I	O	L
G	N	I	H	T	A	E	R	B	A	L	A	A	L	D
A	C	L	L	N	P	P	E	E	L	S	L	R	L	N
T	Y	E	F	A	L	L	I	N	G	E	N	A	A	I
S	D	G	I	L	O	S	I	T	R	O	C	E	H	P
H	O	R	M	O	N	E	S	T	H	E	T	A	S	S

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Alert, Alpha, Bath, Bedtime, Beta, Brain, Breathing, Care, Cortisol, Deep, Delta, Dreams, Drift, Energy, Falling, Five, Four, Frequency, Growth, Hallucination, Heart, Hormones, Hour, Intervals, Light, Night, Paradoxical, Patterns, Phases, Rapid, Rate, Relaxed, REM, Repair, Rest, Rhythm, Sensation, Shallow, Sleep, Spindle, Stages, Theta, Three

Yesterday's Answer: Kensington

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Trout hits leadoff HR, wins MVP as AL All-Stars top NL

CINCINNATI (AP)— Mike Trout flashed the skill that puts him at the front of baseball's new generation, just moments after four of the all-time greats walked off the field.

Trout became the first player in 38 years to homer leading off an All-Star Game, then became the first player to take home the Midsummer Classic's MVP award two years in row.

A new-look All-Star Game finished with the same old result. The AL beat the NL 6-3 Tuesday night and will open the World Series at home for the 10th time in 13 years.

"It's obviously a humbling honor with the MVPs," Trout said in his usual understated, aw-shucks manner.

After Trout completed a career All-Star cycle in just his fifth big league season, Prince Fielder delivered. He drove in two runs, sending Trout blazing home ahead of Joc Pederson's throw with the run off Clayton Kershaw that put the AL ahead for good.

In an age of dominant pitching, Felix Hernandez, winner David Price, Zach Britton, Dellin Betances and Wade Davis took scoreless turns in the AL's third win a row.

Playing on the AL West-leading Los Angeles Angels, Trout could add an even bigger honor this fall—his first World Series ring.

"He can do anything that anybody can do on a baseball field," AL manager Ned Yost said. "He can hit with power. He can run. He can drive the gap. He's a great defender. He's just special. When you look at Mike, you don't look at a 23-year-old. You look at a guy that is one of the best baseball players on this planet."

AP

American League's Mike Trout, of the Los Angeles Angels, holds the MVP trophy after the MLB All-Star baseball game, Tuesday, July 14, 2015, in Cincinnati. The American League won 6-3.

A season after the retirement of Derek Jeter dropped the curtain on the turn-of-century greats, Trout was among six starting position players under 25—the most since 1965. At last year's game in Minneapolis, he hit a tiebreaking triple and later a go-ahead double.

This time Trout sent Zack Greinke's fourth pitch, a 94 mph fastball on the outer half of the plate, over the wall in right next to the visiting bullpen for an opposite-field homer.

Winner of his first season AL MVP award in 2014, the center fielder joined Willie Mays, Steve Garvey, Gary Carter and Cal Ripken, Jr. as the only two-time All-Star MVPs.

Stars old and young gathered in one of baseball's most traditional towns. The Reds became baseball's first professional team in 1869, and players wore caps with horizontal stripes in an attempt at a 19th century feel.

Pete Rose, Cincinnati's hometown hero and baseball's banned career hits leader, was given an 80-second ovation when he walked onto the field before the game to join Johnny Bench, Joe Morgan and Barry Larkin, elected by fans as the Reds' greatest players. Wearing a red jacket and tie and walking stiffly, the now 74-year-old Charlie Hustle was applauded as soon as his image appeared on the video boards, even before he emerged from the AL dugout.

And in the first All-Star Game at Great American Ballpark, which opened in 2003, fans got to see some great ballplayers.

Bench, changed into a blue jacket, returned with Hank Aaron, Mays and Sandy Koufax, voted baseball's great living players by fans as part of the promotion. In a sentimental yet stunning reminder of generational change, Aaron, 81, and Morgan, 71, needed canes to reach the infield, and Mays, 84, was aided on and off the field by an assistant."Growing up, I didn't get to see them play that much," Trout said. "But looking up, seeing highlights of all the Hall of Famers, it's something I really look forward to looking at and I'm learning more about them, just how great they played in every respect of the game."

Above the field, new Commissioner Rob Manfred watched from a luxury suite, the first All-Star Game not presided over by Bud Selig since 1992.

Many players of the new generation love bling in a manner that puzzles the old guard: Posey wore a gold-colored helmet behind the plate, looking a bit like the Great Gazoo or a Praetorian Guard, accessorizing with a chest protector, shin guards and cleats all with gold-colored trim. Baltimore's Adam Jones was shod in bright orange cleats, and Kansas City's Lorenzo Cain and Washington's Bryce Harper donned golden spikes.

Trout, a Generation Y star with a baby boomer work ethic, completed a unique cycle on a clear evening that followed a heavy afternoon downpour.

He singled in his All-Star debut in 2012, doubled to open 2013 game and tripled in the first inning last year. He was just the ninth player to hit for an All-Star cycle in his entire career, joining an illustrious list that includes Hall of Famers Ted Williams, Roberto Clemente, Ernie Banks, George Brett, Mike Schmidt and Mays. Fielder later became the 10th.

No one had homered leading off an All-Star Game since 1977 at old Yankee Stadium, when Morgan connected off Jim Palmer. Greinke, coming off five scoreless outings, had not allowed a run since June 13.

"It's not easy," Greinke said of pitching to Trout. "You've got like a 2-inch window up in the zone. If you throw it higher than that, he takes it. If you throw it lower, he does what he did."

Fielder and Lorenzo Cain had run-scoring hits in the fifth against Kershaw, the reigning NL MVP, that put the AL ahead 3-1.

Manny Machado, at 23 another of the sport's fresh faces, hit a double off the right-field wall against Francisco Rodriguez in the seventh and scored on Fielder's sacrifice fly. And Brian Dozier, the last player added to the game as an injury replacement, hit a solo home run off Mark Melancon in the eighth.

NL runs came home on Jhonny Peralta's RBI single in the second, Andrew McCutchen's homer off Chris Archer in the sixth and Brandon Crawford's sacrifice fly in the ninth.

NL manager Bruce Bochy thought ahead to some future ceremony involving Trout, perhaps at an All-Star Game or World Series, perhaps at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

"He's going to be standing there, I think, with the guys we saw tonight," Bochy said.

While MLB open to pitch clocks, players' union opposed

CINCINNATI (AP)— Baseball management is intrigued with the idea of using pitch clocks to speed play in the major leagues. The players' association thinks it is a horrible idea.

Adopting rules requiring hitters to keep at least one foot in the batter's box and to put up clocks timing between-innings breaks led to the average time of a nine-inning game dropping to 2 hours, 53 minutes so far this season. That is down from 3:02 for the first half of 2014.

"We decided that we would undertake a rather modest set of changes this year," Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday during a meeting with the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

"We also made a decision to make a significant investment to test the 20-second pitch clock further at Double-A and Triple-A. We are really encouraged by the results of that experiment in terms of how it moves the games along.

"Now how quickly that experiment or whether that experiment migrates to the big league level is going to be a product of conversations with the MLBPA."

At Triple-A, the average time for a nine-inning game has dropped 15 minutes to 2:41 in the International League and 13 minutes to 2:45 in the Pacific Coast League.

At Double-A, the average has been cut 12 minutes to 2:38 in the Eastern League, 13 minutes to 2:39 in the Southern League and five minutes to 2:46 in the Texas League.

At lower levels, times range from a five-minute decrease (Carolina and Midwest) to a seven-minute increase (Pioneer, a short-season league whose season started last month).

Major League Baseball Players Association head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman, made clear his members do not want pitch clocks. An agreement with the union would be needed to use them in the big leagues.

"The game is fundamentally different. The game is fundamentally faster. There are more considerations that need to be made at the major level than at the Single-A level or the Double-A level or the Triple-A level," he said.

"We have heard from players who have played in the minor leagues and who have gotten up to the big leagues, and rest assured their experiences wouldn't suggest that they're bending over backward to implement the same thing up here that they are experiencing down there."

Players don't mind cutting the time of between-innings breaks, which they think improves the flow of games. However, Clark said they don't want changes that "dramatically affect the game that is being played between the lines," which he called "a very dangerous proposition to make."

Manfred said expanded video review for umpires, which began in 2014, could see more types of calls added in future seasons. But he doesn't see video aid for balls-and-strikes decisions any time soon, partly because batters of different heights have different zones.

"It's because of speed. It's because of technology limitations," he said. "It's because, quite frankly, the strike zone is different for every single guy."

Former player and manager Joe Torre, his chief baseball officer, said data showed umpires were calling the strike zone the same in 2015 as they did last year, but he said more low pitches were called strikes in 2013.

Manfred says no MLB-wide fan safety changes likely until '16

CINCINNATI (AP)—Major League Baseball is likely to wait until next season before making any changes to improve fan safety.

A fan at Fenway Park was hospitalized after she was hit by a broken bat while sitting along the third-base line on June 5. MLB is studying whether netting should be expanded.

"I don't like to be reactive. Obviously, we had a very serious injury. It concerns us," Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday during a meeting with the Baseball Writers' Association of America. "But making a major change in the game in a reactive mode I believe is a mistake. I think the most likely course for us is that the evaluation will continue this season and whatever change, if we decide to make one, will be something that will be a new regulation applicable to the clubs for next year."

Teams may increase safety netting on their own.

"We set minimum standards," Manfred said. "Obviously the clubs remain free to do what they want to do in their own ballparks."

An Oakland Athletics season ticket-holder sued MLB in federal court in California this week, asking that safety netting be installed for the entire length of the foul lines.

Players' association head Tony Clark said the union could be part of fan safety discussions.

"Obviously, you want everyone who comes to the ballpark to be safe and enjoy the ballpark, and we believe there are some opportunities to address some of those issues to provide that kind of safety support here moving forward," he said. "It is definitely a topic that players will want to engage in, have engaged in, are looking forward to engaging in going forward."

Deron Williams joins hometown Mavs on 2-year, $10M contract

AP
In this Nov. 9, 2014, file photo, Brooklyn Nets' Deron Williams (8) drives against Orlando Magic's Elfrid Payton during an NBA basketball game in New York.

DALLAS (AP)—Deron Williams is joining his hometown Mavericks and will try to help salvage a failed bid in free agency similar to three years ago, when he spurned Dallas to stay with the Brooklyn Nets.

Williams, who grew up in the Dallas suburb of The Colony, signed a two-year, $10 million contract Tuesday. He has a player option in the second year.

Dallas had a deal with Williams on Friday and had to wait for him to clear waivers. It was a boost for the Mavericks soon after free agent center DeAndre Jordan reneged on a deal to sign with them and re-signed with the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Nets bought out the 31-year-old Williams to lower their payroll. They owed him $43 million in the final two years of the contract.

Jordan's shocking reversal was a bigger blow for the Mavericks than Williams' decision in 2012 because the late change of heart left them few options at center in free agency. But it's too early to say it will be more costly.

While Williams' choice to stay with the Nets for their move from New Jersey to Brooklyn came earlier in the process, it didn't help Dallas much.

The Mavericks added Darren Collison for 2012-13 in hopes that his career would blossom as their starting point guard, but it didn't work. Collison was benched, and that season was the only time since 2000 that Dallas has missed the playoffs.

The Williams decision back then also started a three-year streak of summers that the Mavericks missed out on big names in free agency - all since owner Mark Cuban chose salary cap flexibility over bringing back key pieces of the franchise's only championship in 2011. Dallas hasn't won a playoff series since taking the title.

The Mavericks thought they had finally broken through when Jordan agreed to come after an aggressive recruiting campaign led by forward Chandler Parsons. But there were still five days left before the 6-foot-11 Houston native and former Texas A&M player could sign a contract.

Jordan started having second thoughts, and his Los Angeles teammates and coach Doc Rivers swooped in and convinced him to come back.

On Thursday, the Mavericks traded a second-round pick to Milwaukee for center Zaza Pachulia, and secured the agreement with Williams the next day.

The question now is how much the 31-year-old Williams can help Dallas. His scoring average has dropped significantly the past two seasons while injuries slowed him and his happiness was often questioned.

Williams acknowledged a loss of confidence during a rocky 2014-15 season and ended up averaging 13 points, the lowest since he was a rookie. Brooklyn made the playoffs all three years after Williams signed the max deal at five years and $98.5 million, but won just one series.

The signing of Williams also completes the starting lineup for Dallas after the setback with Jordan. Williams, Pachulia and free agent guard Wesley Matthews are the newcomers joining 37-year-old Dirk Nowitzki for his 18th season and Parsons.

Parsons and Matthews might not be ready for the start of the regular season, and Cuban has said the Mavericks won't rush them. Parsons had surgery for a right knee injury that sidelined him for all but one game of a first-round playoff loss to Houston. Matthews ruptured his left Achilles tendon with Portland against the Mavericks in March.

Stoudemire says he's feeling great, ready to join Heat

Amare Stoudemire got recruited by the Miami Heat in 2010.

It's paying off, five years later.

One of the reasons why Stoudemire and the Heat struck a deal this summer was because of what was said when Miami was the first team to visit him during the wild free-agent summer five years ago. Both sides went in opposite directions then, but are finally together now after Stoudemire signed a one-year contract.

Stoudemire, the six-time All-Star who will be asked to play power forward and center in Miami, had to do a bit of recruiting this time around. He passed a physical, then passed an interview with Heat President Pat Riley—and said all the right things for this deal to get done.

"I didn't really say much about what I want as a basketball player, as far as playing time or my position on the court," Stoudemire said in a teleconference on Tuesday. "He needed to know exactly what I bring to the table. Miami was the first team that visited me back in 2010, so these guys are well-equipped to understand my style of play."

It's an evolving style of play.

Stoudemire can still score—he had a 26-point game last season and averaged 11.5 points in only 21 minutes. For his career, he's averaged 19.8 points in 794 games over 13 seasons. But he turns 33 in November and has had bad knee issues in the past, so there may be some obvious questions about how large a workload he can actually handle.

"I feel great," Stoudemire said.

The Heat, with Chris Bosh and Hassan Whiteside, probably won't ask Stoudemire to start much. Stoudemire might end up filling the role held in recent years by Chris Andersen - who might be traded in a salary and tax-shedding move. Or if Miami finds a way to keep all four of those close-to-7-footers, it could have a big-man rotation unlike perhaps any in the league.

"It could be really good," Stoudemire said. "There's a countless amount of opportunities."

For his part, Bosh—speaking Tuesday in Las Vegas—said he was stunned that Stoudemire chose Miami, and thrilled that it happened.

"We've hung out a few times," Bosh said. "Real good guy. I can't believe he came. I was very surprised. ... He's a really good guy and his work ethic, I've seen him work out a few times. He's going to bring that veteran leadership and work ethic to the team. I'm excited."

Bosh said he was also pleased to see Gerald Green join the Heat, taking the same deal that Stoudemire accepted.

"That lets me know they want to win now," Bosh said, "and I think they're in the right place."

Stoudemire said he had calls from other teams, presumably some that would have paid him more than the minimum that Miami offered. But he has plenty of ties to South Florida and the Heat already. He's owned a home in the Miami area for the past seven years, used to work out at Florida International, took classes at the University of Miami, and has been teammates of Dwyane Wade (at the 2004 Olympics) and Goran Dragic (in Phoenix).

"I think with Miami, it's now time to make a push," Stoudemire said. "We have a team that understands what's there for us this year. We'll go into training camp with that mentality and see what we can do." ***(AP)***

Silver: Playoff changes likely in NBA, moratorium mulled

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Changes to the NBA playoffs are almost certainly coming.

Changes to the league's much-discussed moratorium and Hack-a-Shaq aren't, at least not now.

After meeting with the league's Board of Governors on those and other topics Tuesday, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said that—as expected—the league is leaning toward eliminating any protection for division winners in playoff seeding going forward and instead placing the eight teams on the Eastern and Western Conference brackets based solely by record.

There was no vote Tuesday, though one is expected soon.

"It's my expectation that that change will be adopted before the beginning of this coming season," Silver said.

In the past, division winners have been assured of a top-four seed. For example, this past season, Memphis and San Antonio would have been up one spot to No. 4 and No. 5 in the West bracket, while Portland—the Northwest Division winner which had four fewer wins than the Grizzlies and Spurs—would have fallen from No. 4 to No. 6.

"We wanted all the owners to have an opportunity to go back and discuss that recommendation with their general managers and their coaches," Silver said.

It seems like an easy fix.

The moratorium issue, that one is stumping everyone.

The league has an annual window starting July 1 where deals can be agreed to, but not finalized while the salary numbers and other financial matters for the coming year are being crunched. And it got tons of attention this year when DeAndre Jordan committed to the Dallas Mavericks, then changed his mind and stayed with the Los Angeles Clippers.

Jordan broke no rules; his commitment was nonbinding.

"I'm not sure it was his proudest moment either," Silver said.

Changing the moratorium was discussed, and Silver said no one had a good solution. Some ideas bandied about in recent days include having a memo of understanding that could be executed to essentially lock in the commitment while the budgets for the new league year are still being worked out, or simply shortening the moratorium.

"It was not a great look," Silver said. "It's not what we want to see happen in the moratorium period. It wasn't created so players could enter into in essence oral agreements only to have those agreements superseded by binding agreements. Of course, under our collective bargaining agreement, there's no dispute that only a signed agreement is binding. But there was a breakdown in the system to a certain extent."

In other news Tuesday:

ESCAPE ROUTES

The league is looking into not only widening the escape routes—the path next to the basket supports where players can decelerate in while hopefully not crashing into photographers and fans—but also adding a second one of those on each side of a basket for next season.

Players have long complained about the collisions into photographers, and the issue became a huge story in the NBA Finals when LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers crashed into a cameraman and got a sizable cut on the size of his head.

HACK-A-SHAQ

While it seems nobody likes Hack-A-Shaq—the mechanism where teams foul a player intentionally to send him to the line knowing the odds aren't high that he'll make both free throws—it might still be part of the NBA world.

Ratings for NBA games don't show that people aren't watching because of Hack-a-Anyone. And it might serve as a signal to young players about the importance of making foul shots.

"There is a sense, especially from the basketball people, that it would be sending the wrong message to the larger basketball community—particularly youth basketball—to de-emphasize the need for guys to hit free throws," Silver said.

BUCKS ARENA

Silver said the notion that the Milwaukee Bucks could move to Las Vegas "is not realistic in the short term."

The Wisconsin Senate could vote as early as Wednesday on a plan to direct $55 million in state money as part of the public financing plan for a new arena, one where the Bucks' current and former ownership have committed to giving another $250 million toward.

"My hope is that team is not going to relocate," Silver said.

COUNTDOWN CLOCK

The league has had a 90-second countdown clock in arenas to ensure that games start on time after starting lineups are introduced, and the same thinking may soon be applied to stoppages between quarters and for timeouts.

It's believed that a little more vigilance in that respect would shorten games slightly.

Tiger awaits St. Andrews, insists he's not 'buried and done'

ST. ANDREWS, Scotland (AP)—Winless in nearly two years, Tiger Woods at least has experience on his side at St. Andrews.

It has been 20 years since he first played the Old Course as a 19-year-old amateur and heard the secret was to hit it hard and hit it left. After playing the British Open four times at St. Andrews, and winning twice, he realized that wasn't the case. There are bunkers to avoid and angles to create, and it can change with the slightest shift in direction of the notorious wind.

Whether that's enough to carry him this week depends more on his golf, which he says is not as hopeless as it might appear.

"I'm still young. I'm not 40 yet," said Woods, who has five months left in his 30s. "I know some of you guys think I'm buried and done, but I'm still right here in front of you. Yeah, I love playing. I love competing, and I love playing these events."

He just doesn't win them—his last major was the 2008 U.S. Open—and it's rare he even contends since he chose last year to change his swing about the same time he was trying to recover from another round of injuries.

Hope comes from more than just his affection for St. Andrews. Woods said the way he struck the ball in his last tournament round—a 67 at The Greenbrier Classic to tie for 32nd—was as good as he has in two years.

"That was awfully nice to be able to do coming into this week," he said. "I've hit the ball just as well in my practice rounds."

If that's the case, that would make this an important week because it would be the first time since his last victory—August 2013 at Firestone—that he goes into a major with good health and a reasonable idea what to expect.

Consider his last four majors:

He was out three months because of back surgery, missed the cut in his return at Congressional, and then had his worst 72-hole finish in a major at the British Open.

He withdrew in the final round at Firestone after jarring his lower back, showed up late for the PGA Championship and missed the cut.

He took two months off to fix a short game in disarray and returned at the Masters, where he tied for 17th. Woods said he "had a chance to win" at Augusta National, but he was 10 shots behind going into the final round and ended up 13 shots behind Jordan Spieth.

He shot the worst score of his career (85) at the Memorial, and then posted his highest 36-hole score (156) to miss the cut at the U.S. Open.

"Obviously, the previous majors were a little bit more difficult," Woods said. "Last year, coming off surgery on my back and trying to get back and trying to get my feels back, meanwhile trying to making a swing change all at the same time was very difficult. I had some pretty apparent flaws in my technique."

He called The Greenbrier, where he finished six shots out of the lead, a "very, very good sign."

Experience should not be dismissed at the home of golf. Tony Lema in 1964 was the last player to win a British Open at St. Andrews without ever having competed on the Old Course. Louis Oosthuizen (2010 winner) and John Daly (1995) previously played the Dunhill Cup.

That's one obstacle facing Spieth, who is trying to become the first player to capture the Masters, U.S. Open and British Open in the same year. He did play a practice round on his way to the Walker Cup in 2011. And he played 18 holes upon his arrival Monday from his playoff win at the John Deere Classic.

AP

United States' Tiger Woods speaks during a news conference ahead of a practice round at the British Open Golf Championship at the Old Course, St. Andrews, Scotland, Tuesday, July 14, 2015.

Still, the betting favorite is a 21-year-old Old Course rookie.

"You need to learn it. The course changes so much with different wind directions," said Justin Rose, who won the St. Andrews Links Trophy as an amateur and is a regular at the Dunhill Links on the European Tour. "You get a better idea of where the better angles are, where the better layups are with certain winds, and the pin placement can change so much when you have greens that are 60 to 100 yards wide or long."

Woods didn't hit into a single bunker when he won by eight shots in 2000 to complete the career Grand Slam, and he led over the final 63 holes in 2005 when he won by five. In his most recent Open at St. Andrews, he got caught on the wrong side of the draw and finished 13 shots behind Oosthuizen.

And while he knows and loves the Old Course, he's not used to seeing it this way—green from rain, with intervals of rain expected during the week.

"You can't quite chase it like you normally do," Woods said.

For Spieth, experience comes from winning four times this year, including two majors.

"It's a golf course where you can have four, five, six different wind directions," Oosthuizen said. "I think you need to know where the dangers are with certain types of wind. But you know, the form that he's on now, I think he's still the guy that everyone will be chasing.

GUAM

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digit lead to 9, 45-36, with 6:31 to go in the game clock.

The cagers down the Southern island didn't flinch and answered with a 16-3 blast to enjoy a 61-39 spread with 2:43 left to play in the third.

Palau never recovered from that Guam scoring blast and committed a lot of turnovers that their opponents converted into points.

So punishing was the Guam defense that they limited Palau to one shot in every possession and let their opponents commit 24-shot clock violations, the last consecutively in the final two minutes of the fourth quarter and the game already out of reach.

And with Guam big men Holden Barcinas, Mark Temerowski, and DeAndre Cruz patrolling the shaded lane, Palau could not bring the ball down low and slice down to the hoop.

The three were also effective offensively as they collected their teammates' missed shots and converted them into putbacks.

Napu San Luis paced Guam with 21 points, while Barcinas and Cruz combined for 28 markers, while Alsches Grape adding 11 more.

Wallace Worswick led Palau with 17 markers, while Roldan De Lina and Omar Ganac contributed 12 and 10 each.

Earlier, the Alu'u finally barged into the win column after an 82-60 trouncing of the Tatata in the battle of winless teams.

Bud Jason Norita led the balanced scoring of the Alu'u, who pulled away early in the first quarter and were never threatened after that. He finished with 17 points with Rikko Lizama and Tim Pangelinan chipping in 15 and 13 apiece. Sean Apasan, Khalid Islam, and Khristian Itaas scored 10 each.

Tatata's Joseph Kisa led all scorers with 23, while Roger Valencia had 12 more for the Tatata. J.P. Cruz, who scattered 16 points in the Tatata's 103-47 loss to the Dolphins the other day, was held to 2 markers.

First Game

Marianas Alu'u 82 – Norita 17, Lizama 15, Pangelinan 13, Apasan 10, Islam 10, Itaas 10, Ogasawara 6, Miller 1.

Marianas Tatata 60 – Kisa 23, Valencia 12, Quiroz 7, Ong 6, Richardson 6, Leon 4, Cruz 2.

Scoring by quarters: 22-13, 53-22, 67-34, 82-60.

Second Game

Guam 86 – San Luis 21, Barcinas 14, Cruz 14, Grape 11, Min 9, Simon 5, Hseih 4, Temerowski 4, Terlaje 3, Rosas 1.

Palau 58 – Worswick 17, De Lina 12, Ganac 10, Baysa 8, Tarkong 7, Timarong 2, Canate 1, Stark 1.

Scoring by quarters: 20-14, 42-26, 66-40, 86-58.

HONG KONG

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entering the bottom of the seventh inning and only needed three outs to complete the win, but allowed the CNMI to rally back into the game. But closer Jay Fong, after Henry Aguon scored on a Kimo Aingalen forced play, failed to stop the CNMI comeback.

With two outs and the CNMI still trailing 9-8, Tyrese Camacho doubled to left, while Neldreyton Skerei singled to put runners at first and second.

Tindin Leon Guerrero then took Fong's fourth pitch to deep left field to bring in Camacho and Skerei, who scored the game-winning run that completed their comeback.

Their lone victory in the six-team field was a 10-0 blanking of Guam. They also lost to Australia and the Philippines in their final two matches.

"In our only victory against Guam our pitching gave up only one hit, and it was the only game where we had no errors," said Drapeau.

He added that the kids handled each loss better, though tears of disappointment were shed most of the time.

"I recall our team losing with dignity and professionalism. After each loss there were some tears of disappointment, but the pain of losing was quickly forgotten. They did a great job of forgetting and moving on. Certainly they handled it better than the coaches," said Drapeau, who had 10 of the 14 players are 13 years old while four are over 14.

"While it was frustrating to see games lost due to costly errors, it was a rewarding experience for all. In particular it was great to see the kids from four different nations come together and be closer as a team," he added.

Their Junior League team is a mixture of eight Hong Kong Chinese, three Japanese, two from the United States, and one from South Korea.

Still Drapeau said that their team learned a lot from their experience in the regional tournament. "The boys learned a valuable lesson about teamwork, how to deal with adversity, and many of them will be better ball players and better young men as a result."

Drapeau said they are expecting to have a competitive Seniors team for next year's tournament with some of the Hong Kong Junior leaguers moving on. He also expects their Junior league squad to be a stronger unit since most are expected to be back next year.

"Several players, including my son Jonathan will be planning to advance to the Senior division and we are already looking forward to putting together a very competitive Junior and Senior team."

He also thanked the parents of all the 14 players for their great support during their 12 weeks of training and trip to Saipan.

"The parents of all kids were a great support, during out 12 weeks of training and for those who went to Saipan. Coach Thomas Hill and I hope that we helped their boys learn some valuable lessons and that it was a maturing experience for all."

Kwok Yu Conrad, Koh Nakayama, Tam Ho Ki, Lee Taekwon, Tomiyama Yoki, Ao Cheuk Hin, Ng Wang Lok, Lo Go Yin, Fung Wing Hon, Shu Furukawa, Thomas Anthony Hill, and Chiu Lok Hang were the other members of Hong Kong's Junior league team.

HOMEBOYZ

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weiser Cup playoffs with the latter scoring a 9-2 win.

The Hustlers, however, dropped a 9-8 decision against the Crazy 8, who also pulled off 9-4 triumph against the Jokers STR8 Shooters. The Destroyers tripped the Abyss Homeboyz II to earn a finals berth.

Darts Bud Light Cup

In the Bud Light Cup's A division, sister teams Smoke Pub Voyagers and the Huntlaw will clash for the title after hurdling past their respective foes. The finals is set on Monday, July 20.

The Voyagers tripped the Sand Juvy 101 Proofers, 9-5, to earn a finals berth, while the Huntlaw followed suit after a 9-4 crushing of Sakude.

The Voyagers defeated the Mafia, 9-4, while the 101 Proofers edged the Sand Juvy Snipers, 9-7, to arrange a semifinals showdown.

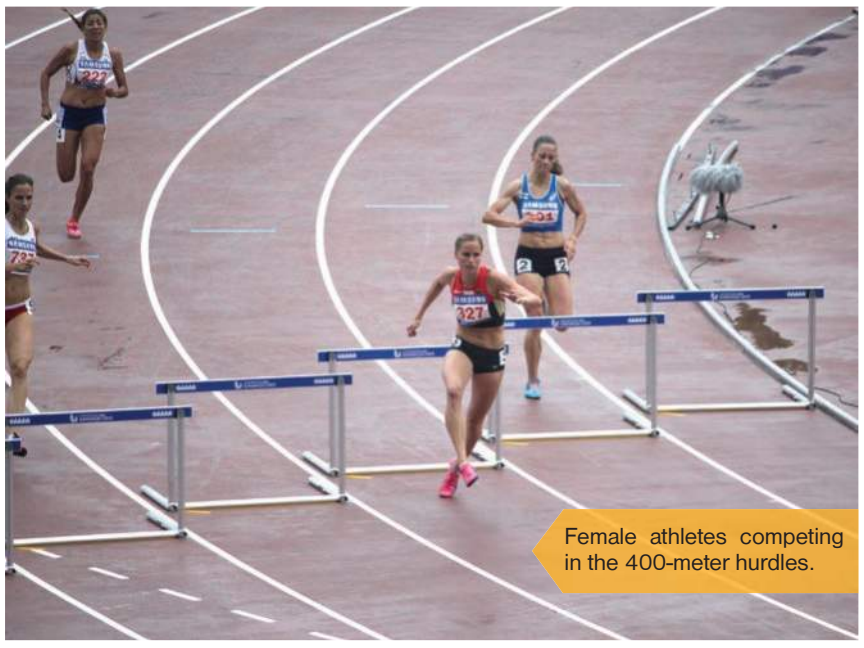
The Huntlaw trounced No Fear, 9-5, while the Sakude earned a semis slot after a 9-4 thumping of the Jokers Warriors.

2015 Gwangju World University Games in Korea

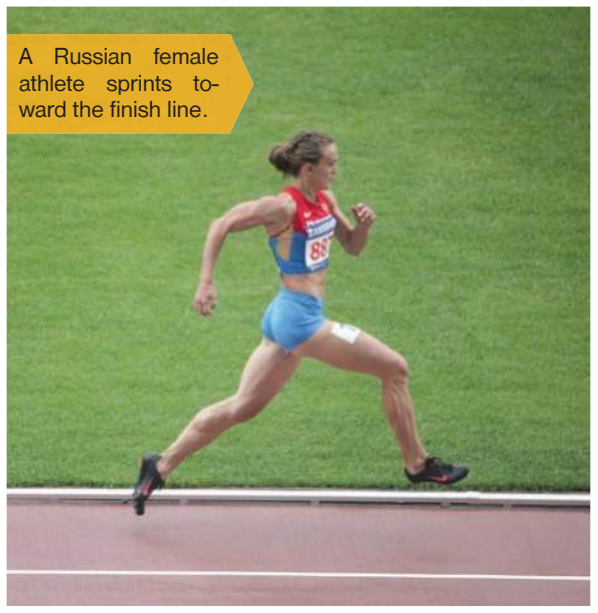
CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Volunteers line up to greet all the participants in the recently concluded XXVIII Summer Universiade in Gwangju City in South Korea.

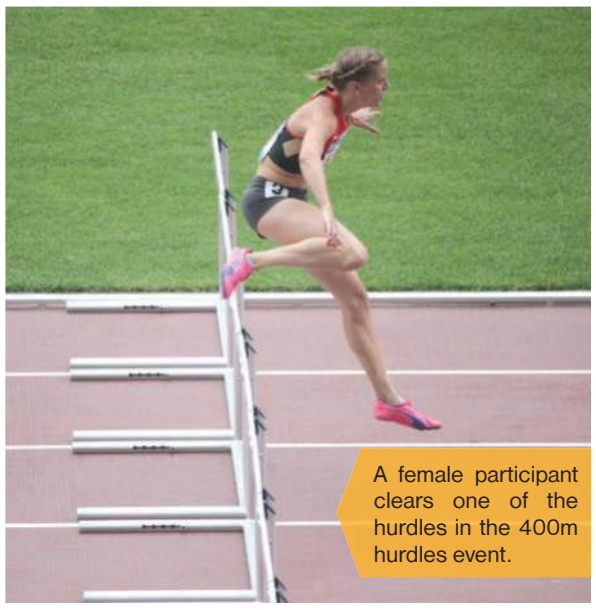
A female Team USA member walks past the Chinese delegation.



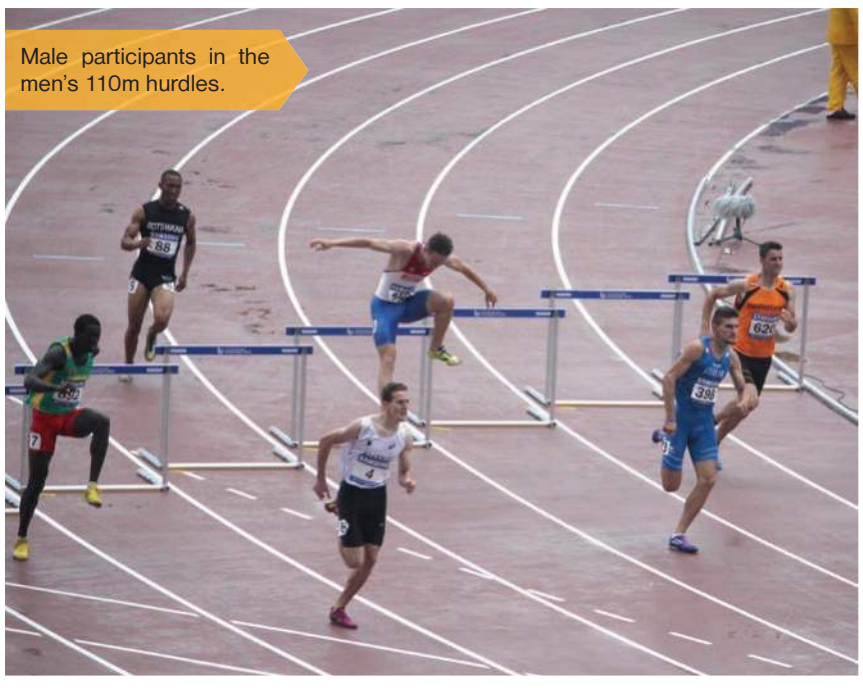
Female athletes competing in the 400-meter hurdles.



A Russian female athlete sprints toward the finish line.



A female participant clears one of the hurdles in the 400m hurdles event.



Male participants in the men's 110m hurdles.

Team USA wait for the start of the parade of nations during the opening ceremony.

The Gwangju World Cup Stadium in the Seo-gu district of Gwangju City.

Volunteers put away the hurdles to prepare for the next track event.

Seiya Eda waits for the Games car after arriving in Gwangju City.

Trout hits leadoff HR, wins MVP as AL All-Stars top NL 6-3

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Sports

Tiger awaits St. Andrews, insists he's not 'buried and done'

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Guam mows down Palau in MBT

JON PEREZ

Palau's M.J. Baysa, left, tries to get past the defense of two Guam players as he goes for a baseline drive, while teammate J.T. Timarong (2) provides the screen in their game in the 2015 Micronesian Basketball Tournament U15 last night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Guam used a punishing defense and fluid offense to deal Palau an 86-58 beating in the continuation of the 2015 Micronesian Basketball Tournament U15 last night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It was Guam's third straight triumph and is already assured of the top ranking whether it beats or loses to winless Marianas Tataga at 4pm today. Palau ended its round robin campaign with a 2-2 slate.

The Marianas Dolphins take on the Marianas Alu'u, which cruised to an 82-60 victory over the Tataga in yesterday's first game. The Dolphins are expected to finish behind Guam with a 3-1 record.

Guam led from start to finish but had some anxious moments in the third quarter when Palau managed to cut their double-

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Homeboyz are Thursday billiards champs

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Jokers Homeboyz completed its title conquest in the Saipan Billiards Association Budweiser Cup Open 8-Ball Thursday League after last week's finals held at their home bar in Garapan.

The Homeboyz ended the Deadshot's Cinderella run with a 9-4 decision over the Hobbies Deadshot to somehow ease the pain of their fourth place finish in the regular season of the Budweiser and Marpac-backed Thursday billiards league.

The Deadshot won the first two Partner's 8-Ball events and were still holding a slim 4-3 lead following the five Singles matches but all went down south after that.

Nolan Cultura and Cesar Sangalang led the Homeboyz's comeback winning the next six matches in the Partner's and Singles 8-Ball events to seal their win in the race-to-9 contest.

The Homeboyz also defeated Wild Bill's and Abyss Rack 'N' Roll on their way to claiming the title, while the Deadshot downed the Jonny's Team SCS and Smoke Pub Magic 8-Ball to clinch the second finals berth.

The Abyss Crazy 8 and the Smoke Pub Ali'I Destroyers will dispute the Tuesday League crown after downing their respective foes.

Title favorites Jokers IT&E Voyagers, the regular season champions, and Smoke Pub Armatech Hustlers, the runners up, met early in the Bud-

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Jokers Homeboyz are the champions in the Saipan Billiards Association Budweiser Cup Open 8-Ball Thursday League after last week's finals held at their home bar in Garapan.

Hong Kong's ASPAC performance filled with what ifs

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Hong Kong Junior League coach Bob Drapeau summed up their performance in the 2015 Asia Pacific Middle East Junior, Senior, and Big League Regional Baseball Tournament to what ifs and could haves.

Drapeu said that they were disappointed with the result and should have ended up higher than their fifth place finish with a 1-5 record, their lone win was a 10-0 drubbing of Guam.

"We had good hitting and pitched very well. Had we made some plays that we should have then we would have finished either at 3-2 or 4-2. We're disappointed in our own won-loss record to say the least," said Drapeu in an email to the *Saipan Tribune*.

Hong Kong lost big time in their opening game against Chinese-Taipei, 24-3, and then wasted a 6-0 lead en route to a 10-9 walk-off defeat against host CNMI.

"We had a large lead versus the CNMI and we let them back into the game with errors," said Drapeu.

Hong Kong was still up 9-7,

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JON PEREZ

Hong Kong's Yoki Tomiyama, right, strikes out swinging in their game against the CNMI in the 2015 Asia Pacific Junior, Senior, and Big League Baseball Regional Tournament last June 27 at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.